

Hi \_\_\_\_\_

*Freestyle Area - Let your parent know why you sent this story & what's happening that's new in your life.*

Kia ora - For most of my childhood I couldn't read, write or talk. When I was 10 years old a couple of major changes occurred in my life & one of the outcomes was that I found the ability to read. Suddenly I could escape from my world which was full of upheaval and abuse into a world of my choosing by simply opening a book.

I didn't do well at school & so when I was in prison, I started to do re-do my school work. I've only recently finished my NCEA Level 2 English. Before doing NCEA I had no idea how to write properly or where to put all the grammar stuff.

Anyway - I guess what I'm trying to say is that I'm a long way off being a good writer & so I'm asking for your patience when I don't tell a story 'quite right.' Also, never think I'm judging in my stories especially like when I talk about gang stuff etc.

Finding ourselves & **then** being able to live the life we want to, can be a hard & long road. During my years I've seen so many of my whanau stuck in the 'same old same old' & of course I came across so many gifted & talented youth in prison. For this reason, one theme that does run through a lot of my stories is 'finding yourself.'

The other thing I want to add in here is that when I was a kid & then a young adult, I had no idea how many awesome & exciting things there are to do in this world - I mean how could I? I'd been a foster kid from 8 weeks old & all I knew was a whole lot of pain - but trust me on this. Take the time now, while you're in prison to explore your mind & make some plans & goals. This is definitely a journey you can share over the on-coming years with your kids.

*Arohanui to you from Darcy*

## Here comes a chopper - Part 2-2

*Soon after word came that his Hawkes Bay gang chapter'd arrived and, so we took our seats again.*

The karanga was called and his gang mates filed in.

The young men bridled with testosterone and reminded me of corralled wild horses, all skittery and jumpy. The gang girls who followed behind the men were astonishingly beautiful; Slender and curvy, lovely smooth brown caramel skin and long black hair.

The girls were much prettier than the boys were handsome.

To some people they would've appeared intimidating but to me they just looked sad. When I was a little girl, I used to think that gang members looked like blow-fly's always in their colours and always wearing sun glasses even at night.

Because there were so many people staying in the marae and only so many mattresses to go around we decided to go home late that night.

Sunday morning. We finally got to the marae just before lunch. I went in to greet Sara and say hello to Matty.

His skin was now a light grey colour and his ears weren't pink anymore.

Matty's ex-girlfriend was lying on him in his coffin and was tracing his face lovingly with her fingers. Then she started fossicking in his jean pockets and she proudly showed us a \$2. coin that she'd dug out of one of them.

Like I'd said earlier, I was mainly brought up in pakeha foster homes and so to see this girl seemingly so comfortable with Matty's dead body was weird.

Not bad weird. Just weird weird.

That night we got to hear stories about Matty.

- One of the gang members proudly told us how Matty'd handled his gang initiation.
  - How sad.
- We also learnt that Matty was a gifted artist.
  - What a bloody waste.

The gang members did a haka making the small marae shake and started swearing harsh enough to make our kaumatua and kuia lower their heads, not in fear, but out of a deep held self-respect and dignity.

Monday morning. This was the final day of the tangihanga.

Today we all dressed more formally. Matty was now looking very dead. His skin was a waxy darker grey and there was a faint yuck smell in the air. But I don't know if the smell was my imagination or not.

It smelt sickly sweet and cloying like dead roses or something.

It was horrible leading up to the part where they were going to cover Matty for the last time.

His sister was crying on his chest and didn't want to let him go. His mum and grand-mother were crying, and his older half-brother just held his hand over his eyes while tears flowed down his face.

Most of the people in the marae had moved forward to stand gathered around his coffin, all trying to get a last glimpse of the boy.

The gang members started another haka and some of the gang girls were holding those big photos above their heads and yelling out gang calls.

I could hear one guy shouting out above the rest;

“You fucking pussy Matty, fucking pussy, piece of shit.”

But that voice was thick with tears and, so it just sounded more like a cry of love than a disrespect.

A white silk handkerchief was laid over Matty's face. His brother and sisters helped fasten the screws on the coffin lid.

### **Our beautiful boy was gone.**

**Click.** My focus comes back in. I see my small hands wringing together. Damp palm skin. I feel my little girl's breathing before I hear it.

My quiet sobs. *Matty!*

I am only almost ten years old. But have lived many lives. In a blink.

No one likes me. They think I'm a bit weird. I am a sad girl.

**Click.** Here comes a candle to light you to bed, and here comes a chopper to chop off your head.

**Click.** I am myself again. I don't talk but I watch people. The foster house I'm in has older kids. One of them is fat. The other two sing nasty songs to her.

***If I was a fat girl...diddle deedle diddle dum...all day long, I'd sit and wonder why! Why I was a fat, fat girl.***

They are very mean. Later the fat girl cries in her room.

No one notices me. I sit next to her and quietly reach out and touch her arm. I absorb her pain.

**Click.** She will almost die of anorexia.

No one likes me. I see stuff.

**Click.** Matty was a sad boy.

**Click.** Here comes a candle to light you to bed, and here comes a chopper to chop off your head

**Click.** Just like his dad.

