

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.

Arohaui to you from Darby

Te Ngeru O Turuturu Mokai – Part 1-2

The cat was rather unremarkable except for the mark above its left eye that resembled the number eight.

It was a much-adored cat who shared a home with two compatible humans in a house that bordered the abandoned Turuturu Mokai Pa site.

The cat's character had always leaned towards mischief. Thankfully for the cat, ever since it'd been a mewling kitten, it had instinctively known how to avoid trouble.

It knew when to purr or roll on its back fetchingly and look upon a human with wide open adoring eyes. It even knew how to prance on its hind legs like a circus bear.

These tools made it highly unlikely that it'd ever get a paddle on its backside after it'd been caught on the bench-top sampling the evening's dinner, leaving deposits of muck in between a pair of freshly laundered sheets or any other feline misdemeanor.

The cat was a young male and just under two years old in human years. He was almost an unusual shade of grey and his fur was neither long nor short. His eyes were a relatively average moggy greeny-yellow.

As already disclosed, the cat's only unusual feature is what looked like the number eight above its left eye. On occasion the cat could be observed idly rubbing the area with a wet-licked paw.

The cat both was both used to and expected complete adoration. The humans with whom it had chosen to live with would always pause in whatever activity they'd been doing to acknowledge the cat's appearance.

The cat in-turn would incline its head in a most regal way to greet them with a slow blink of its eyes.

"Just take-a-look at that cat honey! I wonder what he's been up to all day as he's sure looking pleased with himself the little scallywag!"

Now scratching the cat under his chin which had been willingly tilted to ensure that all the best spots were itched, the human male continued.

"Do ya reckon he's been over at Turuturu Mokai?"

"Probably love, that's where he heads every chance he gets" replied the female.

"I wonder if he's brought back anything for us" she added in a softer voice while smiling at the cat who was now exposing its belly in anticipation of a rub.

This cat like most cats loved to bring home treasures to show-off its hunting prowess.

One time the cat had brought in a bird's feather that neither of the humans could identify and another time it'd brought home a beautifully woven flax poi.

The ancient pa site at Turuturu Mokai was a historical anomaly. It was old, but no one knew exactly how old. It could've been 500 or 800 years old.

It'd also once been surrounded by four or five smaller satellite pa's. Locals say that one of the smaller pa's was once linked by a tunnel that was engineered under the Tawhiti stream linking it to Turuturu Mokai. But no one really knows if this was true or just another myth.

Even the name Turuturu Mokai isn't its original name as that too has been lost to time.

But the cat neither knew nor cared about any of this. To him Turuturu Mokai was his turangawaewae. It was his place. His domain.

You see many of the humans who'd ever lived in Hawera had developed their own theories about Turuturu Mokai.

But to be truthful no one really knew it at all.

Except that is, the cat.

Now if by chance, as I often happened to be, was by the pou which sits at the highest point of Turuturu Mokai in the pre-dawn hours of any morning, it's likely that I'd be able to observe the cat behaving in one of the following ways:

On some mornings the cat would approach the red fence panels with its tail high in greeting. On other occasions the cat would warily approach the pou with its hackle's, raised.

Sometimes I'd observe the cat watching the pou from a distance with un-blinking eyes. Then as if it'd received a signal he would run low-slung to the ground to squeeze in between the railings. Sometimes he just jumped up and then down into the pou.

What is the pou you ask? Back in 1938 a ceremony was held to lift the tapu from the haunted pa site and a carved pou was left to mark that spot. Around the pou is a small fence that's made from red wooden fence panels. These stand three strides square and about 1.5 meters high.

Back to the observation of the cat. On this morning I chanced to see it disappear between the red wooden panels surrounding the pou. Being curious by nature I crept closer for a look.

Not taking my eyes off the pou even for a second, I was stumped to find that he wasn't within the fenced area as I'd expected. Now some people would say 'well the cat ran out the other side'. But I knew that wasn't the case.

The cat had disappeared.

Well before dawn the next morning I hid close to the pou. But the cat didn't appear. Nor did the cat come back the next day. Or the next. On the fourth morning just as the sky lightened and the first birds began to wake I saw the cat softly approaching the pou taking cautious and well considered steps.

The cat hadn't seen me.

This morning the cat seemed undecided about which way he would enter the pou. At one point he stood moving backwards and forwards on his legs in that same mesmerizing way a chameleon does. Then he meowed as he leapt up to balance momentarily on the top of the fence.

Just as he went to jump down I sprang out of my hiding place and flung myself after the cat and caught him by the very tip of his tail as he leapt.

In effect we both leapt together. Straight over the fence into the...

Read Part-Two to find out what happens

