

Catch a boy!

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

Catch a Boy – Part 1-2

When I was a boy my best friend lived over by the abandoned Turuturu Mokai pa.

My parents always made fun of my 'special friend' as they called him. But I wasn't fazed as he was my best mate and I always responded with a 'what-ever' to their jokes.

My friends name was Tonga and we must've been about the same age. We both looked pretty-similar being brown haired, small and wiry.

Once Tonga jokingly said to me that he would've been the chief here one day.
"Yeah whatever." I replied cheekily. Funny what things you remember from your child-hood.

When it was summer I'd take off my clothes just leaving my gruts on so I could run about like Tonga who never seemed overly bothered about clothes at all. Even in mid-July when the grass crunched frosty and sharp under our feet.

One time, we must've only been about nine or ten years old when after a play-fight Tonga nudged me with his shoulder and then indicated with a flick of his head in the direction of the stream. Both of us crawled forward and eagerly peered over the edge down into the pool of water below.

For ages we just laid flat on our stomachs gazing down at our twin reflections. Tonga's head was resting on one arm and he'd let the other dangle over the edge and every now and again his finger tip would touch the water causing it to ripple.

When he'd do this, I'd pull faces and we'd laugh at the distortions as the ripples elongated our grinning faces.

"Tell me what you do" Tonga dreamily asked.

"Like when?" I drowsily replied. The hot sun'd made us relaxed and sleepy.

"When you walk into the mist each time you leave?"

"Huh? What planet are you on Tonga?"

"I was just wondering, that's all. Come on let's play catch a boy!"

Catch a boy was our favorite game. It was sort of like a wild game of chase and rugby all wrapped up in one. The goal was to be the first to get to the top of the pa and then scramble over the red picket fence and touch the carved memorial pou standing in the middle.

The game'd start by both of us climbing down into one of the deep old storage pits on the far side of the old pa.

Then holding each other around the wrists with a firm grip we'd both start spinning around and around until we both got so dizzy that we couldn't stand up anymore.

Then the race was on!

It was hard trying to clamber out of the deep pit while your head was spinning, and you were laughing hard-out and trying to fend off your mate all at the same time. All the way up to the top of the pa we'd



repeatedly tackle each other and often roll back down the steep sides and all while we'd gleefully shout 'catch a boy, catch a boy' at the top of our voices as we ran.

Today just like most other days as we grew tired I heard my mum shouting for me in the distance. Our family lived just on the edge of the Turuturu Reserve in one of the new houses.

"See you tomorrow Tonga, I'm heading home for dinner."

We did a high five and then we both climbed back over the picket fence surrounding the pou. For some reason when I'd stumbled and slid down the grassy banks I stopped and turned to look behind me. Tonga was standing semi obscured in mist looking down at me. We looked at each other for a moment before he waved and ran off out of sight.

Briefly Tonga's curiosity about the mysterious mist flittered across my mind and I tried to remember what he had asked about me going into the mist. But by the time I'd gotten home I had totally forgotten Tonga's questioning.

Summer passed and then a cold winter that was followed by another hot summer filled with long days spent exploring the old pa with Tonga and wild games of 'catch a boy'. When I turned 13 everything changed. My mum had been offered a job over in the Hawkes Bay and so our whole family moved over to the Bay.

The last time I saw Tonga he was standing silhouetted in that mysterious mist waving at me.

Time passed. We all grew up.