

Freestyle Note: Kia ora whanau - use this space to write a message & let your loved one know why you thought they'd be interested in this article.

EDITING 2-4 *Message to a budding writer*

I've always found learning and retaining any information hard. When I read an instruction I forget it and when people explain to me how to do stuff, I unintentionally start day-dreaming. Surprisingly I did okay out in the work-force - but that was because there were patterns and repetitions for me to learn and once I knew how to do something I was okay.

In prison I started to educate myself. I started to learn how to write and do basic math's too. When I got out of prison I continued on with my schooling and finally two years after leaving prison I got my New Zealand Level one Math's and Level 2 (University Entrance) English.

One of the reasons I stuck with my education was because of my love of writing. Just like me I bet that you'll have a whole life-time of valuable stories to share and to help you on your journey you need to know this: **You have to be able to write & present your work in a professional way.**

I'd always had an idea that when you submitted any work to a competition or a publisher that they'd see past the spelling and grammar mistakes and just 'judge' the merit of the story - but it doesn't work that way.

So if you've a passion for writing (short stories, a novel, poems etc) then you're going to have to learn to present yourself professionally.

For Opal people still inside prison this is doubly important because you won't be able to pay people to professionally edit your work.

As an extra note here: editing is bloody expensive & so to get value for money you need to give an editor your best version anyway - otherwise you'll pay extra for them just to fix the basics.

In my writing career my goal is to be the best writer I can be. I don't want anyone ever to give me a sympathy vote just because I'm an Opal person. I want my success or failure to be judged on my ability.

To help you on your journey I've sent you some editing that I paid to have done on some work of mine.

The reason I'm sending it to you is because, this is how I learnt most of the writing skills I have. Yes I passed Level 2 English, but I still haven't a clue what a noun, verb or heavens forbid an adjunct is.

But I've kept all my editing notes because **I CAN SEE** exactly what I'm 'supposed' to do and overtime and through repetition I've learnt the pattern of correct grammar . Like when I write now I can **sense** when I need to use the correct grammar symbol or the hyphenation of a word etc. And if I'm still not sure, I refer back to these eight sets of editing notes that I've copied sent to you to use as a self-help tool .

So there you go - I'll bet that you have stories that can change the world. You just need to learn to write them in a way that they can be easily read by the people who can further your career.

Arohanui to you - Darby

The Touchstone - Chapter Two - Matapo the Blind Tohunga (anything in blue/red - was written by my editor)

My whole life is in this room. I can tell what time of day it is by the touch of sunlight on my bare skin, shining in through either one of the windows facing east, north and west. I also know where everyone in my family is by the vibrations that I feel coming from the two floors below me.

“Hurry up Matakite! The Tohunga is calling for you!”

“What? Who are...? Where am I?” I went to stand up, but not being used to having sight, I became dizzy and my knees buckled under me! The unfamiliar movement and colours made everything sway and dip around me! **could replace ex. mark here with a dash** I went to lean against the bridge but it wasn't there anymore! As my sight settled into focus, I saw a broad and fast flowing stream before me. When I turned my head and looked back along the route that I must have walked only twenty minutes or so ago, there were palisades encircling a small pa! And across the stream was the main pa that I knew as Turururu Mokai! It towered above the landscape with each set of palisades reaching higher and higher into the sky! **Reduce no. of ex. marks**

I knew the boy who was calling out to me! I knew everything about him even though I had never met him before! “Come on Matakite! You must not keep Tohunga Matapo waiting! You know how impatient he is!” The boy's name was Rua and he was a Mokai! **decap mokai and insert dash, decapping a** A slave! I ran in front of him as was the custom for I was an acolyte of Tohunga Matapo's.

Crossing the stream by jumping easily across a series of large flat rocks that had been placed there for that purpose, we ran together around the east side of the main pa skirting the lower palisades. **This sentence a bit clunky, multi-claused – maybe reverse order: We ran together ..., crossing the stream...** Along the way we passed along the edge of the vast gardens where some women and young children were gathered talking and laughing amongst them-selves. **compound: themselves** They didn't even look at us as we passed! **drop ex. mark** About mid-way **compound: midway** along the length of palisades we entered onto the Turururu Mokai pa. The palisades opened inwards to make a passage-way **compound: passageway2** X about a meter **NZ sp. metre** and a half wide. The passage-way led us up, past the first ditch, to the second terrace! At the top we turned left and then ran back in the direction we had come from, except that we were now on the terrace between the top two palisades! **! drop last two ex. marks** Coming around the corner we entered into a separate area where the kumara pits, store houses and some pataka (raised storehouses) were. Right at the very edge of the palisades, as far away **lacking the comparative – as possible?** from every other dwelling was the Tohunga's whare! **decap tohunga**

Maybe insert a suspenseful sentence in this next paragraph about their approaching/first seeing the tohunga. Currently it's suggested that Matapo is seated outside his whare, but you could make context clearer.

I stopped running suddenly and Rua banged into the back of me! **drop ex. mark** The old Tohunga's **decap tohunga** name was Matapo and he was blind. But I had seen how quickly he had turned his head to watch me as soon as I appeared around the corner! Where the Tohunga's **decap: tohunga's** eyes should have been were just deep dark hollows. His white bushy eyebrows emphasized the dark hollows beneath and his long un-cut white hair fell down about his shoulders, framing his ancient face. Every inch of this face was covered in intricate Moko **decap moko** (tattoo) telling the story of his lineage and **maybe cut the 'and' here & split into 2 separate sentences** his deep wrinkles only served to under-score **compound: underscore** his sacred power. His nose jutted out impatiently over the sunken line of his lips! **drop ex. mark.** **Impatiently sounds a bit odd, maybe imperiously?**

So Matakite... you have come to us! **insert Q marks** Falling before him I crawled the last few meters and then sat with my head bowed before him. The smell that came from him hit my nostrils with a jolt. He was pure from the cleansing smoke rituals, but he had never ever washed his hair in his whole life! The smell was like a putrid and cloying grease that I could not evade even when I held my breath! I swear his face flickered momentarily in humour as he noticed my discomfit. We sat in silence for what seemed like hours. Every now and again Tohunga Matapo would break into a rhythmic chant invoking various deities. I knew to sit with my head bowed and not to complain even though my legs were cramping and I was dying to test out my new found **hphenate: new-found** vision by looking at everything! ***Glancing from the corner of my eyes I tried to see as much as possible! But each time I saw something that captured my interest, Matapo would grunt loudly or start chanting! *Try to convey Bart's intense curiosity about his new life and environment as well as his elation at being able to see, although tricky since you also need to convey his mysterious innate knowledge.**

Dusk was beginning to fall and Matapo finally indicated to me, **delete comma** with a nod of his head that we were done. Rua who must have been watching suddenly appeared in front of Tohunga Matapo holding a calabash of water. Matapo opened his mouth and accepted the stream of water from the korere (funnel) that Rua reverently poured into his open mouth.

“Go. Go and explore boy. Go and experience what your heart has longed for.” Tohunga Matapo's head then drooped as if spent. Taking this as my cue **sp: cue** I backed away, still keeping my head respectfully bowed until I was far enough away to stand up in his presence! **drop ex. mark**

I must be dreaming! I looked at my hands and waived **sp: waved** and flexed them in front of my eyes! I looked down at myself. I was wearing a loin cloth that wound between my legs tucking into the band wound around the waist! **drop ex. mark** My feet were bare. Around my neck was a pendant in the shape of a manaia. Feeling my head, I could feel that my hair was tied in a knot towards the back of my head. Tumeke! This was so awesome!

My feet seemed to know where to go and I followed them! On the west side of the area where the Tohunga **decap tohunga** lived, the upper and lower palisades came together blocking any exit. There was a small opening that took you straight up into the top level of the pa, but as I was Tohunga Matipo's acolyte I had to go back around the long way, as the short-cut **compound word: shortcut** was forbidden to me! **drop ex. mark** Retracing the way Rua and I had come earlier, I tried to absorb everything I looked at! **suggest changing ex. mark to a dash, decapping even** Even the ground held fascination for me! I noticed for the first time, all of the obstacles that can get in a person's way and I wondered how I ever managed to walk anywhere safely when I was blind! I wanted to see and touch everything! The chords binding the stakes together forming the palisades were bound extremely tightly and they also had a layer of grease lathered over them to protect them from the elements. *Ugh! At the top of a stake I had just seen my first head! I was relieved to see that it was so weathered by the sun and rain that you couldn't really make out the person's* **apostrophe: person's features which made it easier to handle!** It was beginning to get darker, but I felt so excited that I just wanted to keep exploring! When I had made my way back to the main entry I could see that I had three choices! If I turned left I could explore the top level of the pa site directly above where Tohunga Matipo lived, or I could follow the pathway down into the deep trench and then back up into the second main area within the pa. **Make more of his first glimpse of the heads by having him initially not recognising what they are, and create more of an ominous, dark tone here. Currently sounding quite cheerful.**

Turuturu Mokai was split into sections! So instead of having one huge living area, it had two areas, split by a deep trench and palisades! **drop last 2 ex. marks** My third choice was to head down towards the gardens to explore the surrounding area. Excitedly hopping from foot to foot **insert comma** I made up my mind and walked under the big wooden watch tower leading into the area above where Tohunga Matipo lived. The Toa (warriors) **decap toa** gathered around the watch tower ignored me due to my status of acolyte. Because a lot of the same rules concerning a Tohunga's **decap tohunga** tapu status applied to me, even though I was still only an acolyte, most people avoided me least an offence was made! **least an offence was made awkward wording, and maybe could drop as context clear without, and maybe reorder the sentence so it doesn't start with because ... Many of the same rules ... applied to me, so most people...** Anyway! I was kind of relieved that these fierce looking toa ignored me as they were harsh looking men! **drop fierce looking as unnecessary with harsh looking** Like me, they wore only loin-cloths **compound: loin cloths**. But some wore a cloth like a sash swung over their shoulders! **drop ex. mark** They all wore their hair in intricate top-knots **compound: top knots** and most had feathers stuck into their knot. Most of them had their ear's **remove apostrophe** pierced and had bone or pounamu earrings and had pendants around their necks on plaited chords! **drop ex. mark** Similar to Australian Aboriginals, they wore streaks of white clay that made them look like kehua! Their fierce faces darkened by their Moko **decap moko**, stood out even more above their whitened bodies! **drop ex. marks** **Sounding too educational, so would suggest dropping the reference to Australian aborigines, and trying to reduce descriptions a little as slows down the narrative pace.**

Walking past the toa into the main area **insert comma** I saw fires burning and I could smell food cooking. Only the very young children were running around and playing. The older kids all seemed to be busy. The girls were helping prepare and cook the food within their family units **stone, family units, sounding too formal for teenaged speaker**. And the boys were all with the adult men listening with respect to conversations taking place between the elders so that they could learn how to korero (discuss/talk) well. Other boys **other boys a bit confusing re preceding sentence the boys were all** watched intently as they were keen to see how things like, **remove comma fish-hooks sep: fish hooks**, tools and weapons were made **context not clear here – are the men engaged in making these things and teaching the boys? seems odd that multiple different objects all being made at the same time**. I smiled at a baby boy who was staring at me. I waived **waved** at him and was rewarded with a shy smile before he turned his head away opening his mouth towards the food that his mother was intent on feeding him with. **Shorten this paragraph and make more specific as currently trying to convey too much broad, cultural information.**

"Matakite! Haeri mai, come!" Rua had appeared at my side beckoning me to follow him. He held a burning torch high in the sky to help light our path. On the way back to where the Tohunga **decap** lived, I could see the small pa on the south side lit up by cooking-fires **sep: cooking fires** dotted here and there. The moon had also made an appearance over the hill to the east, casting the land in a pearly glow.

"Where is Tohunga Matipo **insert comma** Rua?" I could see into his small whare that he wasn't there! Rua shrugged his shoulders, as if the answer was obvious! **drop ex. mark** "He's preparing himself for the ceremony! He has gone to cleanse him-self **compound: himself** by the wai-tapu **sep: wai tapu** away from the pa. He will be back soon". **move stop to inside Q mark** Rua went and got a kite **sep: kete** (basket) of Kumerahou leaves and flowers and we went down to the area set aside for us to bath in the stream below where the Tohunga lived **decap tohunga**. *I was looking at Rua really closely! I mean how often do you get to see and talk to a boy your age that lived centuries ago! "Why are you staring at me Matakite!" **change ex. mark to question mark** Rua was being cheeky but I just grinned back. "I didn't realise how atahua (beautiful) you were!" Laughing Rua dived under the water washing off all the soap suds from the Kumerahou leaves! **drop ex. mark and decap kumerahou** We ran back up to the pa. Running was awesome! When you're blind you can't really run as fast as you want to, just in case you bang into something, or someone! **possibly can't run at all if blind?** And so the experience of running fast and feeling the wind rush past my face was exhilarating! I ran taking big bounding strides and then changed tack, pumping my arms and legs as fast as I could for the last sprint around the palisade! The moon was high now and the first stars had appeared. I couldn't believe how brightly the stars shine! ***Tricky re Bart/Matakite gazing at Rua as contemporary kids likely to read gay undertones into scene, so maybe think of alternative phrasing.**

As we approached the whare we saw that Tohunga Matipo had returned! **drop ex. mark** Rua threw himself into a frenzy as he rushed backwards and forwards from the small kauta (shelter to cook in) where he prepared the dishes for the Tohunga **decap tohunga**. The kai (food) Rua had prepared were dishes of fine boned weka and a fragrant mash of aruhe root. The weka had been baking coated in clay all day, which when cracked open smelled delicious! Rua squatted down and fed the kai to Tohunga Matipo **capping Tohunga fine hers as part of name/title**

using a selection of wooden skewers to place the food directly into the Tohunga's open mouth! **drop ex. mark** The process took ages because the Tohunga **decap tohunga** didn't have many teeth! **suggest changing ex. mark to a dash, decapping he** He had to chew for ages on each mouthful making loud polite slaps of his gums and grunts of pleasure as he ate! **drop ex. mark** Finally Matipo made one final loud bellow of a burp and I just caught myself from laughing out loud. Rua had seen my struggle not to laugh and grinned at me! We both ducked our heads to hide our smiles from blind Matipo, who could not see, **remove comma** but who knew everything!

At a discreet nod from Tohunga Matipo, Rua hurried inside the whare to light the small fire that would keep the old Tohunga **decap tohunga** warm during the night. Rua had collected a large kite of soft fern leaves which he spread on top of a thickly woven mat that covered the earthen floor!**drop ex. mark** He then placed a mat of softly woven flax on top of the ferns. Shortly after the Tohunga had retired a smell like incense started wafting out of the whare and a low chanting could be heard as the Tohunga spoke to the Gods. **decap tohunga 2X and decap gods.**

Rua and I could finally have our kai! **drop ex. mark** Usually a **Mokai** decap would not dare to eat with a non-slave! **suggest changing ex. mark to a comma** But we had an un-spoken ruling between us that permitted such freedom!**drop ex. mark** I hadn't realised how starving I was until Rua placed the wooden bowl in front of me. Seeing the eel flesh my mouth watered, and after a hurried karakia, we both set upon the kai, skilfully using our fingers to push the tasty morsels into our mouths! **drop ex. mark** Rua had also used the inner leaves and young flower clusters from the nikau palmtrees that grew on the outskirts of the gardens, which he had boiled in the same water he had cooked the eel. The palm tasted succulent and had a nutty flavour enhanced by the flavour of the eel! **drop ex. mark** Rua did a quiet burp in imitation of old Tohunga Matipo and we laughed quietly together holding our hands over our mouths and then we started rolling around **about rather than around to stop inadvertent rhyme** on the ground laughing gleefully just for the fun of it! **rephrase to suggest their not being able to contain their hilarity, i.e., tried to suppress but failed, then ended up rolling about on the ground** Then to our amazement a Morepork (night owl) **decap morepork and explanation as NZ children will know word – you could consider switching to ruru** sitting watching us from the top of one of the stakes in the palisade called out "mutu whakapohehe ana a tawhio noa"! **cap first word in sentence, Mutu, and move ex. mark inside q. mark** (Stop fooling around) and then it flew off! Rua was visibly shaken and his knees knocked together as he ran around putting away the cooking bowls and tidying things away! I was sure I could hear a quiet chuckling coming from inside Tohunga Matipo's whare!

But all the same, I was chastened too and I set about getting my sleeping area ready!**drop ex. mark** I slept in the small open porch in front of the Tohunga Matipo's whare. Because it was summer time the night was warm and I didn't need a cloak to sleep under. Since arriving, I had been so busy and hadn't had a moment to stop and think about why I was here, or how I was going to get home! For the first time I wondered what had happened me at the 'other end'! I still wasn't really 100% sure that any of this was real! Maybe I had knocked myself out somehow, and was actually in a coma? After a while I finally fell asleep, only to be shaken awake by Rua! "Wake-up! Tohunga Matipo is ready for you! But first you need to cleanse yourself!" **reduce no. ex. marks**

Rua and I hurried along a pathway away from Turuturu Mokai. The path lead over the softly rounded hills heading in the direction that Ra (sun) rises in the morning. Shortly we came to the wai-tapu **wai tapu** where Rua and I parted. I went forward by myself chanting the karakia that Tohunga Matipo had taught me for the purpose of cleansing. At the small pool I sat on my knees before the water and cleared my mind. This was hard to do as I now had so many images jostling for attention in my head! Before when I was blind, my head was full of sounds, but not images! **drop ex. mark** As I completed each part of the karakia I leant forward and scooped a handful of water over various parts of myself. Finally I was able to say 'Kei te mahia e te reira' (it is done!) and re-join Rua for the walk back to the pa. After a few minutes we rounded the final corner and there in front of us was Turuturu Mokai! The moon was still large in the sky and illuminated the landscape! Turuturu Mokai was an amazing sight to see with its terraces, palisades and watch towers standing so commandingly on the hill surrounded by the fast flowing stream! It was alive! **reduce no. of ex. marks**

We stopped just before we rounded the corner from the Tohunga's whare. Rua stepped respectfully back from me to let me walk alone. Approaching the Tohunga who was again sitting cross-legged in front of his whare, I kept my head bowed. When I was within hearing distance, the Tohunga started chanting karakia. In response I started chanting my reply, made even more sacred by the way I approached the Tohunga! Carefully choosing the placement of each step I took! **combine into single sentence** My youthful **suggest dropping youthful** legs flexed and bent as I flicked my heels up behind me! When I was about **spell out: two meters NZ sp: metres** away from the Tohunga we both ceased chanting and entered into a type of a trance.

Tohunga **insert Matipo** was sitting before me with his head tilted to one side listening intently to the whispering Gods **decap gods** and I crouched before him on bended knee. The tendrils of incense slowly wound around us like tentacles! The incense had been made by mixing different gum resins and herbs together to make a blend of smoke that was heady and exotic smelling! A Morepork **decap /change to ruru?** hooted three times and the Tohunga's head snapped up... And he spoke;

*I had a vision of Maori boy who had a trumpet in his mouth. This boy looked like a Maori of all the ages.
This boy had at the end of his trumpet, **remove comma** a Tui bird making a Tui call.
The boy blew his trumpet and I could see that the Maori people, and the others, heard his call.
They rose to the call of the Tui to be warriors of the land. **decap tui 3X**
They rose up from different parts of the land all over Aotearoa and threw the unrighteous from the land of Pukehaupapa (Ancient name for Mt Taranaki)!*

Hearing the Tohunga from my place amongst the stars I returned to the land to reply; **change semi-colon to colon (:)** and **insert Q marks** I am that Maori boy. I hear the call of my Tohunga Matipo and will walk the way it has been laid out by the Gods **decap gods and insert end Q mark** The **remove the** Tohunga Matipo replied "ka waiho i te reira"(it will be).

Chanting quietly **insert comma and remove the** the Tohunga Matipo now led the way up to the highest part of the pa. Every-one was **compound: everyone** asleep within Turuturu Mokai and no one hindered us! **drop ex. mark** We turned to face towards the East, then the West, South and then finally the North **decap east, west, south, north**. At each turn, the Tohunga chanted a karakia, while he gestured towards me and repeated; **remove semi-colon** "kua tae mai te kaitiaki!" **cap first word Kua** (The protector has come). In return I nodded my head and replied "ae" **cap: Ae** (yes) three times!

The night passed and the ceremony ended. Tohunga Matipo and I stood next to each other and looked to the east to see the horizon lightening as dawn approached. Rua now stood close by, closely **avoid repeating close** watching the elderly and frail Tohunga Matipo, ready to spring to his aid if his step faltered! **drop ex. mark** Tohunga Matipo spoke once again. This place is special! This place is your touch-stone! **compound: touchstone** This place is for yours **you?** to watch over the years! We are caught in a circle! This place is named...

...But as the Tohunga's last words reached me, it was as if I felt myself slipping through a funnel! The particles of me became fluid as I was sucked away! The name...! What is the name...? I tried to shout as my mouth dissolved and I was no more.

Freestyle Note: Use this space to write a message or make some notes:

The Opal Place

Your Place of Inspiration



In June 1954, at the age of 15, Hulme and her best friend [Pauline Parker](#) murdered Parker's mother.

Parker and Hulme stood trial in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1954 and were found guilty on 29 August that year. As they were too young to be considered for the [death penalty](#) under New Zealand law at the time, they were **convicted and sentenced** to be "detained [at Her Majesty's pleasure](#)".

Photo Left: Anne Perry

Anne Perry (born Juliet Marion Hulme; 28 October 1938) is an English author of [historical detective fiction](#), best known for her [Thomas Pitt](#) and [William Monk](#) series.