

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 3-4 *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.

Arhawai to you - Darby

The Touchstone - Chapter Three – The Return (anything in blue/red - was written by my editor)

What is the name? Turuturu Mokai! ... What is your name?

“Bart? Bart? Can you hear me?” I opened my eyes and nothing. Just complete darkness. I was blind again. I had never understood what depression was until I felt it wash over me. I was pole-axed by my grief at not being able to see. I couldn’t even talk to anyone. Not even my twin sisters Hine and Huia. Nothing could remove this grief. Nothing.

When I hadn’t come home for dinner, my family together with everyone in the neighbourhood had started searching for me. I was soon found fast asleep by the bridge at Turuturu Mokai. *Avoid passive tense: They soon found me fast asleep...* Apparently I had a guardian sheep sitting by me, chewing its cud. My parents kept on coming into my room and trying to engage me in talk. My mum in particular hovered around me, clucking her tongue and fluffing up my duvet and pillows. I would wake to feel her presence in my room. But I was too disinterested to be annoyed. I knew at a certain level that I needed to break out of this dark place I was in. But I couldn’t muster the strength. I had never felt so tired in my life. All I could think about was *what I had had. Maybe what I had lost instead of had had and then instead of I had lost it all following sentence just All of it gone.* The feeling of running, watching people’s facial expressions, the moon and stars, even the heads on a stakes! I had lost it all. Worse was the nagging doubt that I had never really experienced it. Maybe I was going porangi (mentally ill /crazy) or had a brain tumour. I had missed the last week of school and so now it was the school holidays.

With dialogue each new speaker should begin on a new line – I’ve done the spacing here as an example, but will leave the rest for you to adjust.

I could hear my mum coming down the hallway towards my room and annoyingly it sounded like she was bringing me a visitor. No doubt one of my aunties who would cluck over me as well!

“Hey Bart,” *insert comma* said a too familiar voice. *Too familiar implies he doesn’t like Maddy, so maybe drop the too*

OMG! How could my mum bring Maddy into my room to see me like this! I was so embarrassed that I couldn’t speak. I swear the muscles in my throat all constricted. Maddy could sense how uncomfortable I was but she just talked like everything was normal.

“So your mum said you haven’t been very well and that you haven’t wanted to talk to anyone. So what’s up?”

“I can’t talk about it,” I mumbled. *Move Q mark, insert comma instead of stop after it*

“Why is it a secret? Are you a werewolf or do you have some freaky disease or something?” Maddy jokingly challenged.

“No. It’s just too weird though. I don’t know how to explain it or where to begin.”

Maddy biffed me with a pillow! “Come on Mr Secretive! You stink! When was the last time you showered! Poo! Go chuck on some lynx on or whatever guys do to make themselves smell good and let’s get outside. *make new sentence* it’s so stuffy in here!”

I couldn’t help but crack into a grin. That’s one of the reasons I really liked Maddy. She was straight up!

I held my face up so that I could feel the warmth of the sun on it. Maddy and I were sitting together out on the patio. “So come on, tell me what happened?” How could I tell my new best friend everything that had happened to me...when I wasn’t exactly sure what had happened! “Maddy do you believe in ghosts?” Before she could even answer I started talking. “What if everything we know is not all that there is? *Insert question marks* What if there are parallel dimensions where you can exist in two places or times? Physicists talk about chinks in time where two points meet.”

“Bart for the third time! Tell me what happened! I mean it must have been serious. You haven’t talked to anyone since you were found. The first time I visited you you just ignored me!” “What do you mean the first time?” “The day after you were found I came to see you. But you were just curled up in a foetal ball and wouldn’t acknowledge anyone! Not me, your parents or sisters, no-one! Your mum said that you have never been like this before and she was really worried. So I know something weird has happened to you as you’re like a regular guy and not the sort of person to have hysterics or make stuff up.” “I don’t know where to start. I still don’t know if it happened at all or if I am going crazy.

Do you remember when you guys were teasing me at school about living next door to Turuturu Mokai and you said that it was haunted? Well it is. When we moved here I could feel it almost straight away. I always felt like I was being watched.” Maddy shuffled closer and put her hand on my arm. “So what happened that made you disappear down the rabbit hole?” “I saw Turuturu Mokai.” “No kidding you doofas! You do live right next door to it!” “No Maddy, listen to me, I SAW Turuturu Mokai.” I must have stunned her as we sat there for a while in silence while we each thought our own separate thoughts. Eventually Maddy broke the silence. “What did you see?” I started telling her about seeing Rua for the first time and Tohunga Matipo and what the pa looked like in the moonlight and the heads up on the stakes and what it felt like to run, and the strangeness of having visual images inside my head and then I told her about the ceremony and how Tohunga Matipo was just about to tell me the real name of Turuturu Mokai when I was pulled away. Maddy questioned me for ages, asking for descriptions of what I had seen. She wanted me to explain the colours of things, and fifty million other bits of miniscule detail. We must have talked for hours because suddenly I

realised how shattered I was as I couldn't stop yawning. "But Maddy, honestly I really don't know if it was all real. I mean it was just so unnatural. I never even believed in ghosts before!"

"Bart, comma I believe you. You were born blind. You have never seen anything, but you could describe things to me that you could only have experienced through sight! This is so cool Bart! This is totally amazing!" she lower case said as she threw her arms around me hugging me tight. "Whoa now you two! What have I walked in on?" "Hey Dad cap as used in lieu of a name, have you ever heard of privacy!" "Yeah well sorry about that...but dinner waits for no one! Come on you two, grubs up!" Mum was so happy that I was back in the land of the living that she wouldn't stop talking!

"Bart if you're feeling up to it, comma the day after next I'm going out to Rotokare with my parents to see some hihi get released." "What's hihi?" "Birds! They are little birds that haven't been seen in Taranaki in 130 years! Don't worry though – dash by the time we drop you home my parents will have bored you stiff with a crash course on them." "To (typo too) be truthful I wasn't keen on going on a boring walk to see birds released that I couldn't even see. Maybe tweak: I wasn't keen on going on a boring walk to see birds released, well, particularly now, when I couldn't in fact see them. But I liked hanging out with Maddy and I would probably need a break from my mum who I knew would still want to hover around me for a while yet!

Alternate spellings for a single aunt – Aunty (UK and NZ English) Auntie (American sp.). Here it gets confusing with the two forms, and Aunties implies that there is more than one aunt. If by Aunties you mean her place, use Aunty's

I was still really flat though. I had never felt so constricted by being blind. For that brief time that I could see it was like my whole world had opened up before me and anything and everything felt possible. Now it was just like everything in my whole life was squashed down into things that were safe enough for me to do. I had so much energy pulsing through me, but what could I do with it? I would have given anything to be able to see. "Bart?" Hine was calling me. "Do you want to come out to Aunties Aunty's at Ohawe?" "You had better say yes" insert end Q marks Huia instructed. Insert start Q mark "Because if you say no Mum will go all soppy again and start looking all morose with worry about you!" "Save us!" They chanted, laughing as they pulled me off the bed. "Get off me you two weirdo's! I'm coming!" Far out insert comma my family is enough to drive anyone crazy! I loved going to aunties by the beach. The house always smelt of dogs, cats, the sea and rotting fish heads. "Sorry about the smell!" Aunty would always apologise, "It's for the garden – the fish heads you know." Cap: It's

"We're just going for a walk along the beach, do you want to come?" Dad asked. "No. I'm gonna hang with Aunty." Cap as used in lieu of name "All good. We'll be back by lunch." I made my way into Aunties Aunty's main room. Her house was all open-plan separate: open plan. So the couches and beds were all in the same area. Aunty was pottering around preparing the kai for lunch. Every now and again she would break into some churchy waiata but I could tell she was thinking of a way to break into conversation about what happened to me. A bit clunky, maybe just ... of a way to ask about... "I couldn't get any sleep last night." "Why's that?" "Some idiots were mucking around in their cars on the reserve wrecking things." "Why don't you just fence it off, comma Aunty? Break up into 2 short, sep sentences, capping it! It is our land isn't it?" "Yes but everyone has just got so use to using it that they now believe that they have a right to access it!" "Does it really matter though, comma Aunty? I mean what damage can they do? I mean it isn't as if the land is going anywhere!"

"Bart Kapo-Matakite! This land is where our ancestors have lived for hundreds of years! Ohawe is one of the first areas we inhabited. Right on that reserve where the boat shed compound: boatshed and carpark is and where people drive like they are porangi is where one of the three pa's drop apostrophe in this area use to be! Except, Mr Smarty-pants, insert 2 commas that the headland that it sat on has been excavated right down by about fifteen digit: 15 metres! So don't you tell me that our land is not going anywhere!" I could hear Aunty huffing and puffing to herself. "And another thing is that these idiots who muck about driving like they are crazy, leave broken beer bottles and rubbish around and they also drive drunk when there are kids about!"

"All right Aunty, comma settle down! I agree with you!" But cap Aunty hadn't finished with me yet though! "This is such a special area for our hapu (clan within and iwi). It is a real shame that everyone can't just enjoy it and be respectful. Every part of Ohawe has a rich history and many of our ancestors are buried here. Anyway, comma don't get me worked up!" But I could tell that cap Aunty was smiling now. "I have some chocolates hidden away, let's have a few before the whanau gets back!"

Aunty had the most-wickedest sweetest tooth I have ever known anyone to have! a bit clunky: maybe ...tooth of anyone I knew She always had stashes of chocolate or sweets hidden about. "Do you want to talk about what happened and why you wouldn't open your waha (mouth)?" "Aunty, do you believe in kehua?" "Well yes of course! I'm a Christian and we believe in the Holy Spirit." "No I don't mean the Lord, I'm talking about normal ghosts, you know like people who use to be alive just like you and me." I could hear Aunty sucking on her chocolate in deep thought before she replied. "Bart, comma there are a lot of things we can't see or don't understand in this world. I always pray for guidance in these things. I don't go searching or trying to make contact with spirits because the Bible tells us not to. But I have faith that there is nothing in this world that does not come under the Lord. So in answer to your question. Yes I believe there are ghosts, but I try to ignore them as they belong to a different place." This section above very long/dense so definitely need to break up with new lines for each speaker re dialogue.

"Is the kai ready?" Dad yelled from the doorway. "We are starving!" Soon the small kitchen was full of my whanau bustling around getting plates out, buttering bread and preparing cups of tea and coffee. Sitting surrounded by your family and listening to them all happily talking and eating is a special thing. I had the idea that it would be neat if I could take a mental snapshot of this moment so that I could re-live it whenever life got tough. Sitting there I made a decision. I decided that I was actually a lucky guy. With that realisation the depression lost its grip on me. I

know **knew** I couldn't see. I don't **didn't** even know if what happened at Turuturu Mokai was real. But what I did know is that I had an awesome whanau. Life, I thought to myself, is never what you want it to be, but it is what you make of it. **Maybe tone down the positivity just slightly here, or rephrase, as transition seems very sudden from depths of depression to his being so upbeat. Mental snapshot tricky expression re his blindness. The last line is losing the teenage tone, sounds a bit too mature/adult. Maybe something about surrounded by family, the laughter, the kai, his suddenly realising the blackness was receding as opposed to the more definite decision making.**

A day has passed so briefly imply the time transition **Maybe insert fleeting reference to waita, re later comment**

"Hey you're in a better mood! But I bet you won't be by the end of the day Maddy whispered." But she was wrong! We had an awesome day out at the Rotokare Scenic Reserve which is inland from Eltham.

The smells and sounds **maybe sounds and scent, as smells more neg. connotation** of the native bush, lake and all the birds was totally awesome. Even the air felt cleaner out there. Maddy's parents were really into conservation in a big way and were really excited about the release of these rare forest birds called hihi or the stitch-bird. Hihi meant 'ray of sunshine' and that's the name given to them because the male bird has bright feathers. Everyone oohed and arred as the forty **40 digits for numbers over ten** hihi were released into the bush. Even I felt good to know that these little critters were back in Taranaki after 130 years! On the drive back Maddy's parents talked with passion about their upcoming protests against iron-ore dredging off Patea and Maddy firmly instructed me not to ask them any questions otherwise she warned; "they would 'never-stop' going on!" **de-hyphenate never stop and can drop the all Q marks here, as well as semi-colon, as Bart's reporting her speech rather than Maddy speaking directly.**

Summer set in, **comma** in stops and starts. The older aunties and uncles kept complaining that December wasn't as warm as it used to be but I thought it was fine. Christmas was only a couple of weeks away and I was so looking forward to it. I am a total sucker for Christmas. Just the smell of the tree, tinsel and sugary biscuits and the topped with cinnamon is enough to make all my senses tingle with anticipation of fun and of course... presents! **tinsel doesn't smell? maybe smell (or scent) of the tree and biscuits and tickling feel of the tinsel?**

I had been purposely ignoring the frequent stillness that always seemed to envelope our house and property in waves. *And every time I heard the faintest strains of a waiata being sung from the reserve I would purposely try to ignore the sound it.* **This a bit sudden and brief. Seems odd that no prior mention although he's heard the waiata several times. Suggest somehow inserting a passing/quick reference to his hearing the waiata at some point earlier on in this chapter. You want to capitalize on the suspense. Maybe just before the hihi trip with Maddy and her parents, as would be good to have the sense of a day passing there in any case.**

Most days I would either hang out with Maddy and our mates in town or she would come out to my place and we would listen to some sounds **(sounds sounds odd! – music / mix tapes)** and she would make me laugh by reading to me aloud what our friends were talking about on Facebook **cap** or she'd describe the photos on Snapchat **cap**. Hine and Huia usually had mates over too and more often than not everyone would end up **laxing is laxing teen speak? Not familiar with it – maybe better chilling?** in my room. It was as far away from our well-meaning but pesky parents as you could get! Today Maddy and I were lying outside on a blanket in the shade of a tree in our backyard. Maddy wanted to hear in detail about my adventure over on Turuturu Mokai...again. It was like she was fascinated with it. I just tried to forget it as it did my head in thinking about it.

"So what was the last thing Tohunga Matipo said to you?" "For the millionth time, **comma** he said: This place is special! This place is your touchstone! This place is for yours to watch over the years! We are caught in a circle! This place is named... and that was when I got sucked away!" "Where were you standing when he said this part?" "Um... we were on the highest part of the pa. Looking towards where the sun came up." "Bart that's where the fenced off **hyphenate: fenced-off** pou is! Listen to what the Tohunga told you... This is your touchstone! Bart it could be a portal!"

"Whatever Maddy!" "No it must be! He said it was your touchstone! Why else would he say that? Why don't we sneak over tonight and find out?" **insert question mark** "Maddy you're crazy!" "You aren't scared are you Bart?" My parents were ok **cap: OK** with Maddy sleeping over, but I had to keep my door open during the night. It was kind of embarrassing really – **dash** I mean did they think I was some lecherous horn-dog that would pounce on my best friend? *I must admit I was a bit excited thinking about tonight* **tweak ...admit I couldn't help thinking about her suggestion**. Could she be right? Was the carved pou standing to commemorate the spot where the elders had lifted off the tapu from Turuturu Mokai back in 1938 a portal? I had all those random feelings you get when something too good to be true might be going to happen. I mean what if I really did go back? That would be totally mind **hyphenate** blowingly cool. But what I was really preparing myself for was the disappointment I knew I'd feel if nothing happened.

Well after mid-night **compound: midnight + comma** Maddy and I crept out of the door leading off the side of the garage. To me the darkness of night was the same as the light of day. But I knew that Maddy would be finding it hard. "Are you ok **cap: OK**?" "Yup, **comma** it's all right. There is a moon tonight. It's hidden behind the clouds, but it is still making everything brighter." For the first time I heard a bit of hesitation in her voice. "What's up with you?" "It just feels ghosty," she replied **comma, lower caseshe**. Now that we were outside the roles had been reversed and I was the brave one.

"We'll be ok! **cap OK** You can see the way to go, so I'll just hold onto the back of you so we can get there quickly." Soon we had reached the bridge where I had been found sleeping. Crossing it we passed through the wooden gate. Maddy then led us around the lower part of the pa

before we scurried up the steep banks on our hands and knees. Finally we reached the very top. In climbing up we had startled a flock of sleeping sheep who had also given us a fright with their loud baa's **drop apostrophe**s they ran!

"There it is... the pou!" Maddy led me over so that I could feel the picket fence protecting it. The fence was quite high but Maddy had found that a couple of the pickets were missing and so we were able to squeeze through. "Okay, **OK to be consistent** are you ready?" Maddy asked. I felt nervous. This was it. Maddy guided my hands towards the pou and then I heard her step back. Cold sweat was running down my back and I had an uncomfortable prickling feeling deep in the glands in my armpits and groin.

My two hands grabbed hold of the pou and at first nothing happened. But just as I was about to let go I heard a voice say: "*I had a vision of Maori boy who had a trumpet in his mouth*" and I responded automatically ... "*I am that Maori boy. I hear the call of Tohunga Matipo.*" Straight away it felt like my body became fluid. I could feel every particle and every atom vibrate and move. It felt as if my body was being torn apart and made boneless.

The last thing I saw was a gorgeous girl crouched down before me with frightened eyes the size of saucers... "Maddy!"

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.