

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 4-4 *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 - Part of draft: Chapter Four – The Moa Hunt (anything in blue/red - was written by my editor)

“Maddy?”

She had disappeared. My body momentarily convulsed and shook as the final parts of me all came back together. The first thing I had noticed was that I could see! This sounds lame but I was so grateful for the return of this gift that my eyes smarted with tears before I hastily blinked them away.

Realising that I was standing poised as if I was gripping the pou, comma I straightened myself up and looked around. The sun was high in the sky and the people within Turuturu Mokai were moving around as if they were anticipating something unusual was going to happen. I could tell this by the way people talked excitedly in groups and walked with a purpose to their step.

All of the adults as well as any kids old enough to know the rules avoided making any eye contact or interacting with me in any way. This was pretty much normal for me because I was Tohunga Matipo’s acolyte and so that meant that I too was tapu. But playing together at the back of a raupo whare was a group of really young kids who were staring wide-eyed at me.

A couple of the braver boys puffed out their chests and performed a pukana (facial challenge) on me by rolling their eyes and thrusting out their tongues! I jumped up in the air yelling hiha! While widening my eyes and flaring my nostrils!

The kids ran screaming! reduce the no. of ex. marks Chuckling to myself I leant against the palisades so I could let myself adjust to everything that had just happened.

When I had first come back in time, everything was felt so rushed. And I wasn’t even really sure that it was reality. I had thought that maybe I had hit my head and was in a coma or something. But now that I understood that everything I witnessed was actually real I couldn’t believe my good luck! I had really come back in time! And the best thing of all was that I could see!

“Matakite! You’re back!” Tohunga Matipo’s mokai was jogging towards me.

His name was Rua and he is the same age as me. He is small for his age, but really wiry with chords of muscles clinging to his fine boned hyphenate: fine-boned frame.

“Tohunga said you would be up here,” he said with a smile as he caught his breath. I couldn’t help but return his cheeky grin. “Come on Matakite, he is waiting for you.”

Running together we set off at a jog. Man! I loved running! Just like the last time, as soon as I appeared around the last bend Tohunga Matipo’s head quickly turned to follow me. This was freaky as I was way out of ear-shot earshot so he couldn’t have heard me and he was definitely blind as he had no eye-balls eyeballs!

Sitting myself respectfully in front of the tohunga with my head bowed, comma I waited for him to talk. Time passed so painfully slowly. But still, delete comma the tohunga did not move or speak. My eyes were beginning to get drowsy when to my surprise a tui swooped down to fly around us. Its wings beat the familiar chop chop sound as it flew around our heads. I was dying to have a look but I knew to keep my head bowed. Then the tui landed on my shoulder and I couldn’t resist turning my head a little to steal a peek at it. Huh? I got a shit of a fright because instead of looking at a normal Tui bird head like I expected, what I saw was my face looking back at me on the Tui bird’s body!

“Tohunga Matipo! The Tui, it’s...” Tohunga clapped his hands twice and the Tui flew off.

“Matakite you must learn to be patient. Did I ask you to look at te manu (the bird)? Did te manu ask you to look at te manu?” “Kao (no) Tohunga Matipo, I am sorry.”

“Matakite, comma when we seek what we are not allowed, we open ourselves to danger. Do not forget this lesson.”

Tohunga made a raspy sound in his throat and dash or break to 2nd sentence Rua quickly appeared in front of him with a calabash of cool water which he poured carefully into his mouth through the korere making sure that not even the tiniest drop touched the lips of the old tohunga. this sentence slightly clunky and suggest breaking into two The Tohunga spoke to me.

“Matakite, comma tonight the chief will seek me out to ask when the moa hunt can take place. We have not hunted the moa for many seasons as their time has almost passed. You, Matakite, will leave here and go to await a sign from the gods that we have permission to hunt his child. Go!”

Tumeke! I felt like I had been given permission to go and have some freedom! Leaving the area where Tohunga Matipo and Rua lived, **comma** headed off following the curve of the palisades on the top terrace. *I felt weird though because I was totally aware that I was operating in a sort of duality. My feet knew where to go, and I definitely knew how to act and what to say as Matakite, but I still reacted to what I experienced as though I was Bart! Tweak last 2 sentences as slightly clunky, esp. still reacted to what I experienced maybe simpler: ... but I still felt like myself, Bart!*

I walked down to the main gardens and then followed a well-worn track leading north. After about five minutes I took the split in the track to the left and then met up with the path that would eventually lead me to the wai tapu where I would cleanse my-self **myself**.

The land all around the pa's **delete apostrophe, and just pa if referring to a single main parather than it plus the smaller ones** had been kept clear of bush and trees by use of a fire stick. This was for many reasons such as cultivating vast gardens, making it easy walk around and importantly to make sure any enemies weren't sneaking up! **This prior sentence sounding a bit too explanatory than in character**

Because of the cleared land I was able to get a really good look at Turuturu Mokai and the smaller pas surrounding it. I counted five other small satellite pa's surrounding the main pa. I was blown away to see how large this place actually was. It was more like a small city!

After completing my cleansing rite I sat there relaxing. The wind had dropped and the small pool I was sitting next to was as flat as glass. The ferns and plants around the pool were perfectly reflected. Suddenly a thought came to me. Creeping towards the edge of the pool on all fours I peered over. Looking at back at me was a boy on the cusp of man-hood **manhood**. Leaning forward my eyes drank in every feature.

I frowned and wriggled my eyebrows up and down and even opened my mouth to see what my teeth looked like. I couldn't get enough of looking at myself! **insert ex. mark** I have no idea how long I laid there gazing down at my reflection.

But suddenly a cool breeze rippled the pool blurring my features and ending my fun. Nightfall wouldn't be too far away and I had just realised that I was starving. Making my way into the cool bush, **comma** I lifted my nose in the air and I kept on sniffing until I had found what I was after. Following the pungent smell of harore wafting in the air currents I tracked down the tasty fungi.

I plucked a number of them from the ground and whipped off any dirt before I popped them in my mouth. Then still not satisfied, I saw a rotten log and so I busted it open with a heavy rock. Yum! Inside whereheaps of wriggling and fat Huhu **huhu (no cap)** bugs that tasted like slushy peanut butter! After I had eaten, I walked for a long time until I ended up on top of hill that was higher than any other around.

Settling myself into a dip in the ridge-line **ridgeline** I had a clear 360 degree view all around me. I could see Pukehou papa (Mt Taranaki) rising up out of the forests, **comma** dominating the landscape. And away towards the south west the horizon was in the process of changing from blue, **delete comma** to indigo to a starry black.

Sitting there, **comma** I started singing an ancient hunting waiata. The air stilled around me but the movement amongst the bushes let me know that the patupaiarehe (fairies) had snuck closer in to listen.

After much time had passed I stilled my mind by closing my eyes and breathing deeply. More time passed and the celestial sky moved continually around me. I saw things that were to be and my eyes wept. My visions were of the six types of moa that walked this land. I saw them disappearing one by one.

I saw other birds and heard their **their** calls silenced as well. Amongst them were the takahe, the kakapo, the huia and kokako. I saw Pukehou papa burst forth into life raining scalding ash down upon our land, killing the mighty rimu forests to the north and sending the last few moa screaming in terror.

I saw a young man, not much older than me, **comma** get his stomach gouged out by the sharp toe of a huge moa. *This moa, a female made cunning by her pain, screamed as she was slain.* **the made cunning reference confusing, as well as the order of the visions: moa becoming extinct coming before the moa being killed** The toa surrounding her lifted their voices joining in her primal screams with their roars of triumphant blood lust.

My eyes flicked open. The air was quiet. Holding my hand up to help focus my vision I saw away in the distant sky a bright star appear. As it sped closer it grew in size and brightness and the land was lit by an unearthly light that all of the creatures of the earth hid from.

I recognised this light. It was a comet. Halley's comet. This was the sign.

The night had not yet given into dawn, but yet Turuturu Mokai was ablaze in light. Flaming torches were lit and fires were burning. Up on the highest level of the pa, **comma** right in the middle, **comma** was the wharenui and sitting in front of it was Tohunga Matipo. On the other side

of him sat the ariki (chief) and the kaumatua. Young and old toa stood in groups talking and gesturing amongst themselves. The rest of the men who were not toa stood behind them and the wahine were gathered at the back of the area in front of the whareniui. [the behind, back, front succession a bit awkward sounding](#)

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.



Both photos: The Pou at Turuturu Mokai - Hawera, South Taranaki - New Zealand