

Ruka Trilogy – Story two - My name was mum

Hi _____

Freestyle Area - Let your loved one know why you sent this story & something good that's happened recently.

Kia ora young one, I hope you like the story I've written for you. I was brought up in the NZ foster system & just like your mum or dad I've been in prison to. I like writing stories for you because writing is a good way to share your feelings & thoughts. I also have a 'vibrant' imagination & so being able to write lets me use this fun part of my brain.

I want to share some of my thoughts with you because I've a feeling that you'll understand what I mean. When I was a kid & then a teenager, I didn't really hold a lot of hope. I couldn't read or write for most of my childhood & I didn't speak much either. I also didn't trust people & never felt safe around them.

& then, I was surprised in later life to learn that: there are more good people than bad people & that there are so many cool things to do in this world. Please let my message of hope help you during this hard time & please:

Learn to be 'your champion.' When you do something well, congratulate yourself, when you feel sad, acknowledge your feelings - but don't let them take over you. Also learn to read books as that will teach you all sorts of useful things & allow you some escapism when life gets hard. The thing to hold onto is that **one day you will be an adult** & the ruler of your own destiny.

Arohanui to you from Darby

Ruka Trilogy – Story two - My name was mum

I'd always been an optimist. Whenever things in life didn't work out I'd always said to myself 'It'll be okay, things can't get any worse.' But I'd never truly understood what loss could do to a person. But now I know that some hurts are just too deep to recover from.

My therapist asked me to write about my life and what happened. He thinks that this'll help me get over my daughters suicide. I cry a little as I write that. I can't say it out aloud yet, as it's too final – **DAUGHTERS SUICIDE**

My daughter's name was Mereana. I was only a little girl when I'd first heard that name. I loved the way it rolled off my tongue. *Mere-ana*. Such a pretty name. My girl didn't like it of course. She just wanted to be called plain, Mere.

There isn't anything really interesting I can write about myself. I am no-body special.

I was born to a Maori mum and a Pakeha dad in the days when mixed-race relationships weren't encouraged. They were only teenagers when they had me. I got taken off them and put into foster care when I was somewhere between one and two years old.

My childhood was all right. I did have some nice foster parents.

I was 15 when I got pregnant with my girl. I think I loved Mereana's dad. I remember the first time we had sex. It was okay. Men had interfered with me when I was a kid. But Mereana's dad was different. He was the same age as me. He had a really cute smile and he always smelt good. He wasn't old and stinky.

I was scared and excited when I found out I was having a baby. I was about seven months pregnant before I went to the clinic to ask for a preggy test to confirm it. The nurse told me to lift up my top. I can still see the incredulous way she looked at my tummy poking out. Followed by the scathing glance that said 'you need a test to confirm this?'

But I wasn't 100% sure if I was pregnant. I'd read something once about phantom pregnancies and besides some girls just got fat easy.

The first time I saw Mereana I couldn't believe how beautiful she was. Having a baby was weird. I remembered sitting in that hospital bed and looking down into her face. Her eyes were wide-open, looking up at me. I wanted to ask someone for an instruction guide as I had no idea what to do with this baby! Still, Mereana's birth was definitely the happiest day of my life. I do know that.

Mereana was a good girl. She was never any problem. I loved being a mum. I got my own place and I did it up really nicely. I'd save any money I could and find treasures at garage sales and second hand shops. My girl was always dressed nicely. I read bedtime stories to her at night too. She had a little rabbit lamp she loved.

When Mereana was eight my son was born. I'd like to say I know who his dad was but I don't. Sometimes one of my mates would look after Mereana and I'd go out to try and earn some extra money. I didn't do this often.

I named my son Ruka after Saint Luke. Saint Luke is the patron saint of doctors. I thought my son might grow up wanting to become a doctor. I still thought back then, that anything was possible.

I had two beautiful children.

They were the light of my life.

Mereana was so good at her school work. She often talked about being either a nurse or a paramedic because she loved helping people. My son Ruka was gorgeous. He was a really sensitive kid who loved hugs, teddy bears and being read too. His favourite game was hide n seek. I loved my kids.

Life was so good.

I don't know what happened. I didn't notice any change in Mereana.

Nothing.

She didn't even leave a note. I have no idea why she wanted to die. I have so many un-answered questions and so much guilt. There must've been something I did wrong. I can't stop thinking about her. I often walk from home to the bridge where she jumped, all the while, thinking, thinking, thinking.

I get so consumed by panic. I just want to find her. I feel like I've gone crazy. Some people think that if a person commits suicide that they go to hell.

I worry about this just in case it's true. What if my precious girl is in hell? This thought torments me.

They took my boy. This was probably a good thing. It makes sense for them to protect him from me.

My girl killed herself. There must be something wrong with me.

There's nothing left but pain.

I had it good for 15 years.

I just want to be left alone to think about my girl.

Or drink myself into oblivion so I don't think about her.

I don't want any other hassles.

My name was mum

What a sham

I am, as I always was.

No-body special