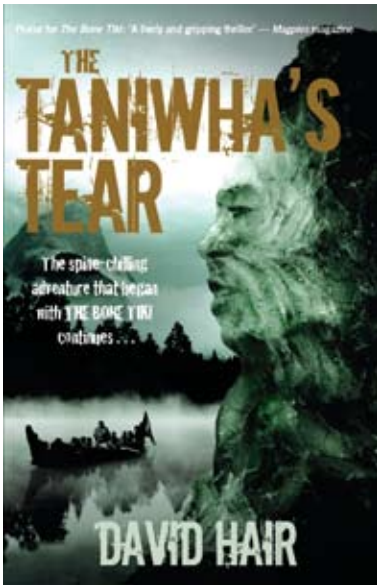


THE TANIWHA'S TEAR by David Hair



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The Taniwha's Tear, the keenly awaited sequel to *The Bone Tiki*, is another compelling adventure from the pen of David Hair. As in *The Bone Tiki*, *The Taniwha's Tear* easily straddles the modern world of New Zealand and the parallel world of Aotearoa steeped in the supernatural mythology and history of New Zealand. *The Taniwha's Tear* skilfully exploits the idea that while these two parallel worlds exist side by side, only people who know of their existence and have special powers are able to slip in and out of these worlds at will and at different points in time, sometimes centuries apart. In *The Bone Tiki* we are introduced to this fantasy world through the adventures of part-Maori Matiu (Mat) Douglas, who discovers he has special powers and a high moral compass which he uses to defeat the evil tohunga Puarata and his evil magic (makutu). In *The Taniwha's Tear*, Mat is again called upon to use his gifts for the good of the people who live in the parallel world of Aotearoa. While bone-chilling and at times terrifying, *The Taniwha's Tear* will absolutely captivate young readers with its many twists, turns and surprises. Although most characters and events are fictitious, many are based on real people and real historical occurrences. This, along with the modern-world setting and familiar New Zealand locations, brings a strong sense of reality to the gripping story. Best suited to students years 7–12+.

Story synopsis

Since the defeat of the evil tohunga Puarata and his release from the bone tiki, Wiri the warrior lives with Mat and his father Tama in Napier. Mat has been busy at school and has thought little about his magical powers and the parallel mystical world of Aotearoa. Before Tama and Mat visit Tama's estranged wife in Gisborne, Wiri and Pania warn Mat of the dangers of visiting Aotearoa before he has had instruction in managing his powers from a soon-to-visit Welshman called Jones. Pania also reveals that since the death of Puarata, many evil ruanuku (tohunga) are all vying for the top position of power in Aotearoa. The most evil of these magicians is John Bryce, a government Native Minister who was responsible for the atrocities of Parihaka. By the Wairoa River Mat is drawn by voices in his head and meets an old Maori woman. She tells Mat that in ancient times a Maori girl named Haumapuhia was drowned for disobeying her father, a powerful chief. She took on a new life as a taniwha and in desperation to find the sea, she smashed out a large valley now called Lake Waikaremoana. The sun rose and she was turned to stone and her spirit imprisoned. Reluctantly Mat agrees to visit Aotearoa and release her from the rock. He enlists the help of his friend Riki and Riki's friend Damien. The boys meet two teenage girls, Cassandra and Lena, and Mat becomes aware that Lena has similar but weaker magical powers. The teenagers meet Jones and Mat agrees to help him release the taniwha from the stone. Unbeknownst to Mat, this is not his instructor but rather the evil John Bryce who wants the power of the taniwha to crush all his enemies in Aotearoa. Many other evil tohunga are also racing against each other to reach the taniwha but Mat's special powers are needed to lift the taniwha's curse by retrieving a shrunken head from a cave. Mat lifts the curse. Knowing that Mat will not agree to his evil plan, Bryce, by promising Lena riches and power, gets her to use her magic to become the taniwha. Lena hears the words of a powerful tohunga in her head who tells her that what she is doing is wrong. Lena makes a choice and asks that the taniwha becomes her, rather than her becoming a taniwha to be controlled by Bryce. The real Jones arrives, and helps rescue the teenagers and return them to their anxious families. They first visit Lena's family to try to explain her death but find that she is there, now as combination of Haumapuhia and Lena. Jones convinces Tama that for the future safety of Mat, he must be tutored to use his special powers for good.

Pre-reading activities

- Have students use atlases to locate the following settings for the story: Wairoa, Lake Waikaremoana, Gisborne, Urewera National Park, Waikaretaheke River, Napier. Now have students use the 'Fly to' feature of Google Earth for a virtual visit to these locations. Use Google Search to find images of and information about the formation of Lake Waikaremoana.
- Can students recall the previous adventures of Matiu (Mat) Douglas in *The Bone Tiki*? Tell students that this story begins after Mat has used his magic powers to help kill the evil Puarata, the black tohunga. Remind students that Mat has special powers that allow him to slip in and out of the parallel world of Aotearoa.

During and post reading activities

- Encourage students to refer regularly to the glossary while reading the story to become familiar with the Maori words that are used. Why did the author include a glossary? Discuss how the glossary has added interest and meaning to the story. Can students recall any other books they have read that have a glossary included?
- Did the students know that the evil character John Bryce was based on a real person in New Zealand history? Have students conduct research on John Bryce and the shameful Parihaka incidents at: www.parihaka.com/About.aspx
- Do the students think that the John Bryce as portrayed in the story mirrors the true character of this man during his lifetime? Have students read the author's note (before the glossary). Conduct Google research on the real-life characters included in the story. Compare the 'doings' and characters of the ghosts in the story with their past real life in early New Zealand.
- Have students find incidents in the story that clearly show the differences between how Mat and Lena regard and use the special powers they both possess.
- Can the students explain the difference between makutu (evil magic) and the magic of true tohunga ruanuku? Can they think of any (non-magical) everyday situations or incidents in real life that illustrate this difference?
- Discuss the difficult situation that Lena now faces. Can they think of any difficulties she could face in coping with her new dual identity?
- What steps do the students believe Tama should or will take to help Colleen, Mat and Tama live together again as a family?