



SCHOOL JOURNAL

NOVEMBER 2014



TITLE	READING YEAR LEVEL
Tohunga	6
Olden Days	5
The Pink Umbrella	6
Reckless	6
Painting the Town	5
Up the Pipe	6
Wining's Wairau	5

This Journal supports learning across the New Zealand Curriculum at level 3. It supports literacy learning by providing opportunities for students to develop the knowledge and skills they need to meet the reading demands of the curriculum at this level. Each text has been carefully levelled in relation to these demands; its reading year level is indicated above.

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SCHOOL JOURNAL

LEVEL 3 NOVEMBER 2014

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TOHUNGA

BY POTIKI

- BASED ON A TRUE STORY -



It was early morning, and their mother had been up all night. Hana watched from the doorway as Mā put a hand on Rāmahi’s forehead.

“Get the hōiho,” she said to Te Ao. “We go soon.”

“Back to the doctor?” Te Ao asked. Hana’s brother was always asking questions.

At the sound of the word, Rāmahi whimpered. “Kia kaha, son,” Mā reassured him. “There’ll be no more doctors.”

Te Ao and Hana saddled Mā’s horse, packed the second horse, and waited. They didn’t have to wait long.

Mā emerged from the whare and climbed on her horse, taking the reins in one hand. She motioned to Hōri, the eldest, who was carrying his sick brother. Hōri was to stay behind to care for the little ones, tend the animals and māra, and keep the fire burning. They would need hot water and kai when they returned.

The older boy gently lifted Rāmahi and sat him in front of Mā. The boy slumped forward and wrapped his arms around the animal’s neck. “If anyone comes round, tell them we’ve gone to the store,” Mā instructed as they departed. “We’ll be back tonight.”





Hana knew it was miles to the old lady's house. She had travelled this route many times. The native school and the store were along the way, and as they passed by, Hana turned her face. What would Mā do if people noticed them? Where would she say they were going? But no one was about, and they carried on. Beyond the tiny settlement, the long gravel road eventually gave way to a grass track. After that came dense bush.

Although it was overcast, the morning had grown hot. Hana and her brother took turns leading their

mother's horse. The second horse was loaded with supplies, including the tent Uncle Haki had brought back from the war. They needed it in case the river flooded and they were stranded overnight. Even though they were prepared for the worst, Mā was certain the dark clouds would clear. Hana had never known her mother to be wrong when it came to the weather. Mā had all kinds of ways of knowing. She would feel the early morning grass for dampness, observe the direction of the wind, carefully watch the clouds and the sea.



By mid-morning, they had begun the climb up to the ridge. Here they paused to rest. While they sat, Mā recited the landmarks spread before them in the form of a pātere. “Ka tau taku manu ki te tihi o Tarakoa ...,” she chanted. Some of the places were wāhi tapu, where blood had been shed or there were urupā. Others were hunting or fishing grounds. Then Mā told a story about the taniwha who sometimes lurked in the moana and the awa, pointing out where the water was discoloured or where there was a strong current.

“From maunga, to awa, to moana,” Mā concluded. She pointed but didn’t need to say anything more. Hana and Te Ao knew these were the traditional boundaries of their hapū.



The sun was at its highest by the time they arrived. The whare was in a clearing alongside a well-kept māra and fruit trees. The old lady gave Hana the creeps, so she was relieved when Mā told them to wait outside. They watched as Mā entered the whare, the koha of kai on her back, her arms supporting Rāmahi. Hana sneaked a glimpse of the old lady peering suspiciously, but the piercing green eyes of the tohunga were enough to make the girl turn quickly away.

Hana and Te Ao were hungry, so Hana unpacked the kete filled with kina and the crayfish and dried shark wrapped in old tobacco bags. Then they sat on the ground to eat.

“They say she’s a patupaiarehe,” Te Ao said. “You can’t see her reflection in a mirror.” Hana was sceptical of the rumours – but still, she didn’t dare say anything for fear of being cursed.

They finished eating and began, cautiously, to look around. Mā had told them to be respectful of their surroundings – this was not their kāinga – and not to wander off. But it wasn’t long before curiosity got the better of Te Ao. He tried jumping up to the whare’s small window, then spied an old barrel to stand on.

“She’s doing a karakia – and now she’s got some rongoā,” he reported. “It’s probably poison.” Te Ao peered closer. “Now she’s throwing water on him and massaging his throat. Come and look!” Hana ignored her brother. She didn’t want to look. She wanted to go home.



They waited until Mā and Rāmahi finally came out of the whare. The old lady followed, muttering – her ancient reo poetic but incomprehensible.

“Hoake tātou,” Mā said. She carried a sack that overflowed with some kind of leaves that Hana had never seen before. “We need to get back. Rāmahi must rest.”



It was dinnertime, two days after their visit to the tohunga. Since their return, Rāmahi hadn't improved, and Mā was tense. Hana was helping the little ones, who were distracted and chattering.

“Hoihoi!” Mā commanded. Then the expression on her face and the tone of her voice suddenly changed. “Haere mai ki te kai, son.”

Rāmahi had stumbled into the silent kitchen, obviously still weak – but he was up. “Māmā, can we get some Pākehā bread from the store tomorrow?” he asked. Everyone laughed – the sound filling the whare, filling Hana's ears and her heart.

AUTHOR NOTE:

When Māori were unwell, they traditionally consulted a tohunga. This was a healer who knew which plants and herbs (known as rongoā) cured illness. In 1907, the New Zealand government passed the Tohunga Suppression Act. This made it illegal to use rongoā, and tohunga who did so could be fined or sent to prison. However, many Māori continued to consult tohunga. To protect the tohunga, these visits would often be in secret.





PAINTING THE TOWN

by Renata Hopkins



Paris by Askew One and Mark Henare

If you visit Christchurch these days, you'll see some surprising sights among all the diggers and road cones. Huge faces peer down from the sides of buildings, multi-coloured animals leap through space, and a giant ballerina dances high in the air. Artists are hard at work alongside the construction crews. They are covering the broken city with colour, humour, and beauty – things everyone needs.

... creativity
can help to lift
people's spirits.

Street Art Explosion

Since the earthquakes, 80 percent of the buildings in the central business district in Christchurch have been demolished. Building a new city takes time – and while that's happening, creativity can help to lift people's spirits. Music, film, writing, and dance have all been part of the creative response to the quakes. But the most visible art form in Christchurch today is visual art, especially large-scale paintings. How did this explosion of street art come about?

After the February 2011 quake, Christchurch Art Gallery was closed.



The Black Hat by George Henry (a reproduction from the Christchurch Art Gallery's collection)

The gallery began to display art in temporary spaces, including on the walls – and even roofs – of the city. A group called Gap Filler has also supported many creative projects, including the painting of large murals. Then, in December 2013, two public art events took place: a project called From the Ground Up brought a group of New Zealand artists to Christchurch for a week of creativity on the streets; and a major street art festival called Rise opened. That month, artists from New Zealand, Australia, and Belgium painted fifteen artworks on city walls.

I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour
by Wayne Youle



Shadows, Sunshine, and Dancing

One of the first public artworks to be made after the quakes is by Wayne Youle. His painting is called *I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour*. It is 37 metres long! The painting is a giant shadow board, like the ones used to organise tools. (You might have seen something similar in a workshop or shed.) But Wayne didn't just paint tools in his artwork. You'll see musical instruments, toys, and animals too. He explains his idea like this: "The mural is for those who lent their tools and their hands to all who needed help. And for those who lost something in the quakes, no matter what that something may have been."

"The mural is for those who ...
lost something in the quakes ..."



Another artist with a message for Christchurch is Holly Ross. Along with her friend Olivia Laita, Holly painted *We Got the Sunshine*. The brightly coloured lettering flows over a wall near the Cardboard Cathedral on Madras Street. Holly says she wanted to do something that would make people happy. The words remind people to enjoy the good things in life, especially when times are tough.

Holly says the quakes have had a big impact on her recent work. "I definitely consider my audience a lot more," she says. "I want to paint things that will hopefully make people feel happy – and make the city a more enjoyable place to live."

The final wall painted in the Rise festival was by Tauranga artist Owen Dippie. He covered one side of the Isaac Theatre Royal with a huge painting of a ballerina (see page 14). Her glowing blue tutu can be seen from far away. Owen's painting is a reminder that the theatre will soon be home to dancers and actors again. You could say he has turned the theatre inside out, bringing its life to the outside.

But how did the other artists painting Christchurch get their ideas?

The words remind people to enjoy the good things in life, especially when times are tough.



Creative Inspiration

Unsurprisingly, inspiration can come from anywhere. Auckland artist Askew One takes photos of people with interesting faces and morphs them using contrasting colours and patterns (see page 8). Holly Ross is inspired by music. The words in her painting were taken from the chorus of a hip-hop track by P-Money. Artists are also inspired by other artists. Owen Dippie loves the work of Renaissance painter Michelangelo. Christchurch-based Tess Sheerin's favourite artists are M. C. Escher and Salvador Dalí. For others, comics and graffiti art provide inspiration.

The work of painting duo BMD often features quirky animals. One of their

large Christchurch walls shows a fox that changes shape and colour as it leaps through space. Another huge BMD painting on Cashel Street shows three strange creatures laid out on folded blueprints. Blueprints get talked about a lot in Christchurch these days, so BMD took the idea and made it playful. Instead of buildings, their blueprints show animals they plan to paint in other large artworks. From a distance, the paintings look three-dimensional; up close, they reveal hundreds of tiny details. BMD want their art to appeal to people no matter what their age – and whether they're into art or not. Like Holly Ross, they want to “make people smile”.

Blueprints by BMD






Painting on a Grand Scale

When an artist paints a very large wall, they can't see the whole drawing – only the section they're working on. So how are these paintings made? Some artists transfer a scale drawing of their artwork onto the larger surface using a grid pattern. Another method is to project a photo of the artwork onto the wall and trace around the shapes. Other artists sketch their outline freehand. Christchurch artist Jacob Ryan (who's also known as JacobYikes) says, "I just let go and allow the work to create itself. I only guide it."

A primer coat is often applied to the wall first to make a smoother surface. Next, artists choose from spray paint, house paint, or a mixture of the two. Brushes and paint rollers are used to apply the paint – but there are other fun ways to get paint on a wall. For *The Hope Bear*, Tess Sheerin filled balloons with paint and threw them at the wall to make splatter effects. Kids watching were invited to help throw the balloons! For another painting, *Giraffing Around*, Tess filled fire extinguishers with paint.

"I just let go and allow the work to create itself. I only guide it."





Other artists use stencils to make their art. Wayne Youle worked in this way to make his enormous shadow board. One of the world's most famous street artists, Banksy, also uses this method. Stencils provide shapes that can be filled in to form blocks of colour. These shapes can also be layered on top of each other to create a more complex effect.

When you're painting big, there are other considerations, like reaching the high bits. Artists need either a bionic arm – or proper equipment. BMD list some of the options, all of which they say work. "We started out standing on rubbish bins or balancing on bikes, then we sat on each other's shoulders. After that, we got our first ladder!" To get even higher, artists use scaffolding, scissor lifts, or cherry pickers. These artists need a good head for heights!

Ballerina mural by Owen Dippie



Changing City, Changing Views

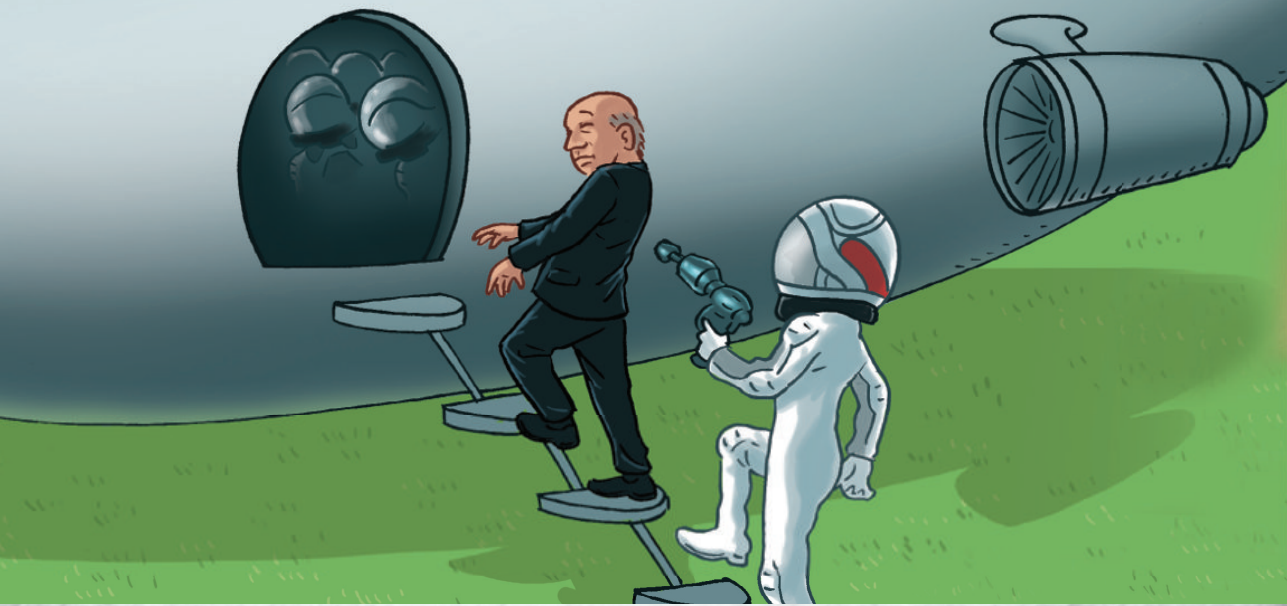
Artists who work on the walls of buildings know that their paintings might not last. This is especially true in Christchurch right now. Unsafe buildings are being demolished all the time, taking paintings down with them. When new buildings go up, they sometimes block existing artworks from view. Tess Sheerin accepts this as a part of making public art. “My murals hopefully capture a moment in time. I will miss them, but I believe they did their job for the community – and that’s what is important.”

Not every painting is loved by everyone. Wayne Youle says, “It’s public art. You’re going to get half-backers and half-haters. It doesn’t matter what you do.” However, in a city where something disappears every week, the energy and life generated by these paintings is what really matters. Whether you like every single one is beside the point. The art has been created because of what has happened to Christchurch, and that’s the beauty of it.



Tess Sheerin painting
Quin the Duchess Duck

If you’d like to see more work by the artists mentioned in this article, you can search the Internet for their websites. You can also visit the Christchurch Art Gallery’s website: www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz



OLDEN DAYS

by Rachel Stedman

Last week was just an ordinary week – until Wednesday. Wednesday was different. That’s because on Wednesday, our principal, Mr Potts, was kidnapped by aliens – although he called them something else ...

They came in a spaceship and pointed a ray gun at Mr Potts. Mr Potts looked surprised, then scared, then a bit sleepy.

“He’s stunned,” whispered Morgan. “That’s what aliens do in movies. They stun people with ray guns.”

The spaceship had a set of stairs out front, and Mr Potts was taken up those stairs. Then the spaceship flew into the air and vanished.

“Did you see that?” said Mrs Hayes, the office lady.

The bell rang for the end of lunch, and we went back to class. We didn’t see Mr Potts return. We didn’t see him come down the folding stairs and go to his office, except for Morgan, who was coming back from the library.

“Mr Potts looked freaked,” he said, “like he’d seen a scary movie.”

The next day, we had assembly.

“Some of you may have seen something ... strange ... yesterday,” Mr Potts said. We nodded. It had been strange.

“You may have thought I was kidnapped by aliens,” he said. Some kids laughed, but I didn’t. Aliens do kidnap people. I’ve read about it on the Internet.

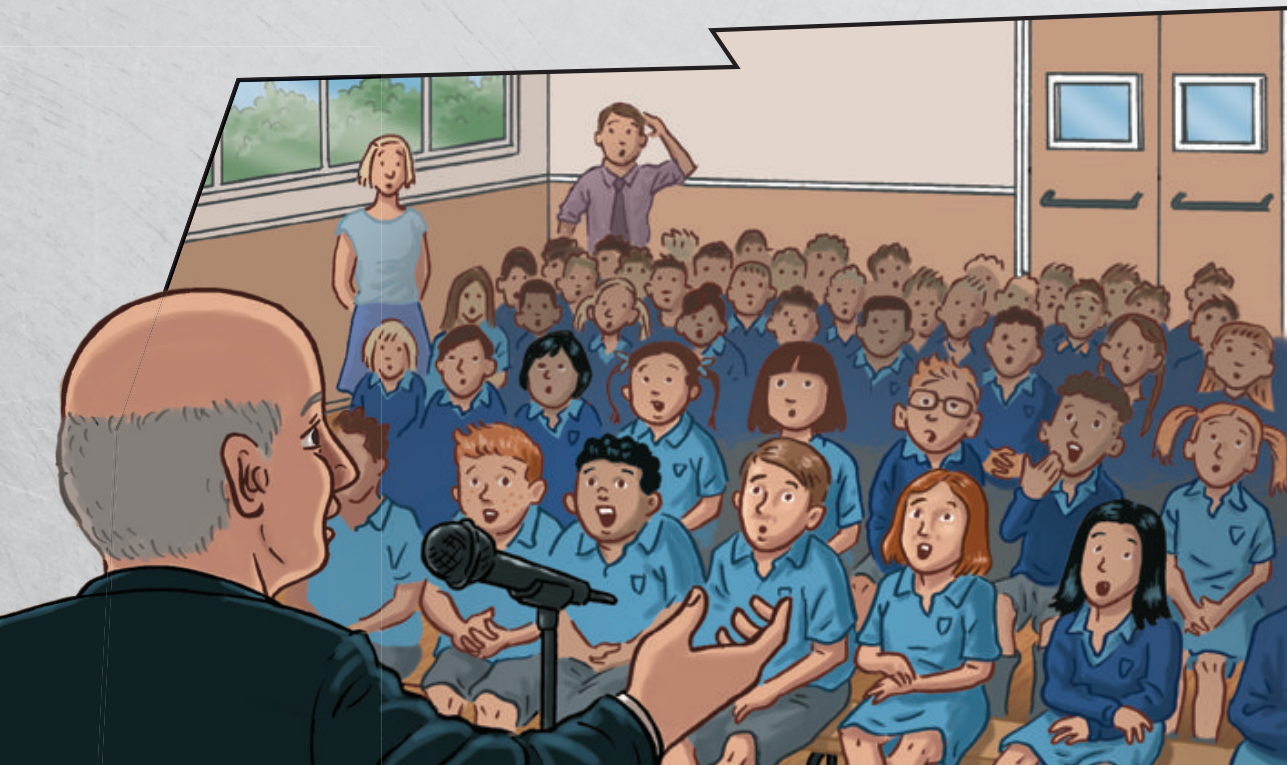
“But actually,” Mr Potts continued, “they weren’t aliens – they were time travellers.” This time I did laugh. Everyone laughed. Time travellers! I mean, how dumb is that?

Mr Potts held up his hand. “These people are from the future and have colonised another planet. They would like to come on a class trip to our school.”

We sat with our mouths open, even the teachers. Was he joking?

“Sometimes we visit museums,” said Mr Potts, “to see how people lived in the olden days. Well, it’s kind of like that. Anyway, I agreed. I’m sure it will be very educational.”

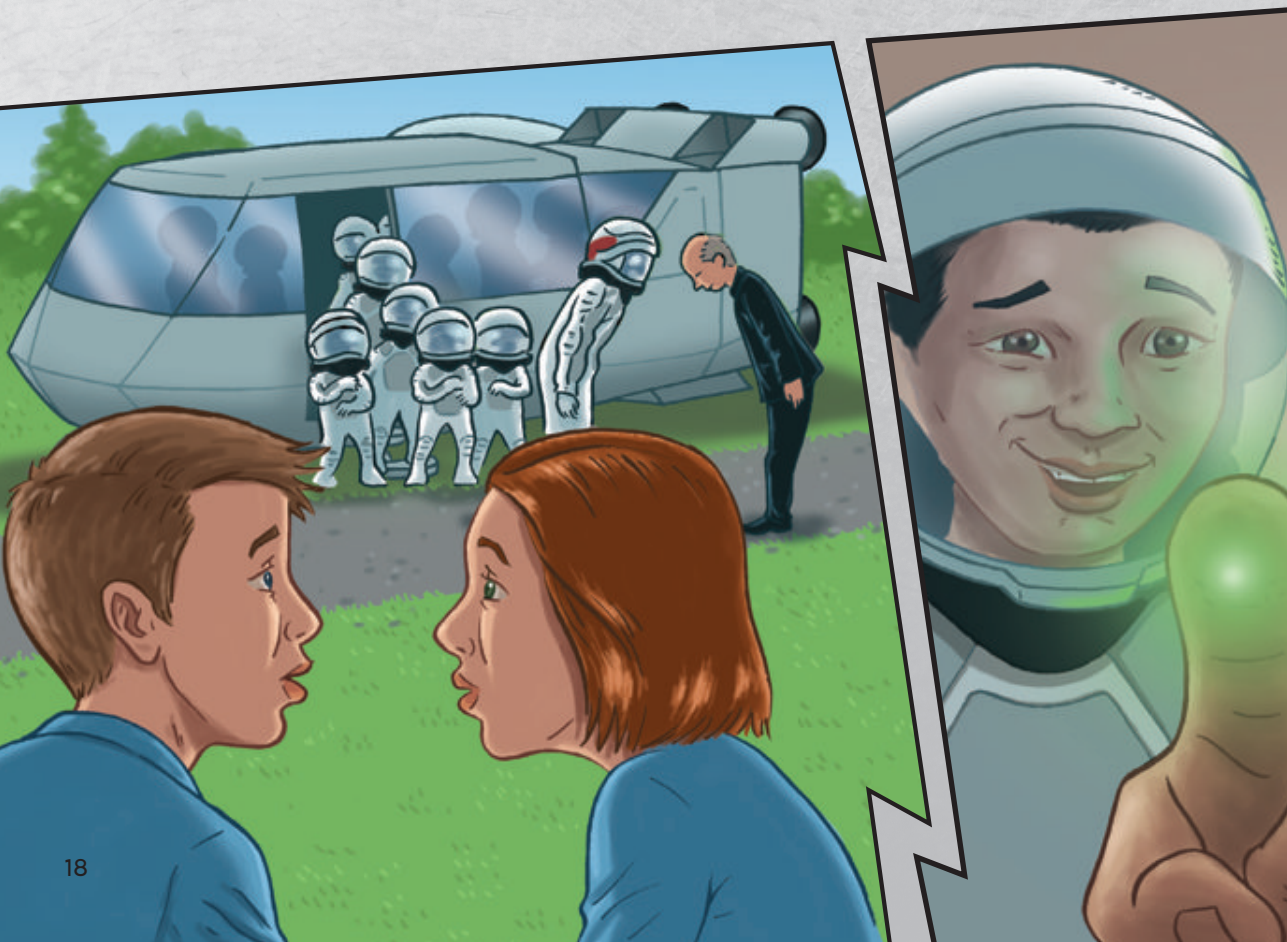
We were too stunned to talk, apart from Morgan. “But this isn’t the olden days,” he whispered. “This is *now*.”



The time travellers arrived the next day in a kind of bus. An adult-sized traveller came out first, followed by the children. All of them wore spacesuits and helmets. “They’re nervous of germs,” Mr Potts explained. “They don’t have colds in the future.” We were nervous of ray guns, but it looked like this time, they’d been left behind.

The children crowded close like *they* were scared of *us*! Mr Potts stepped forward and shook the hand of the tallest visitor. I guess it was the teacher. “Welcome to the twenty-first century,” Mr Potts boomed heartily. The teacher bent forward at the waist, giving a small bow, and so Mr Potts gave a small bow back.

We showed the visitors the hall and the library. They all seemed very friendly. Then the smallest ones went with Mrs Brown to the junior classes. Two of the older ones, a boy called Xan and a girl called Zu, came to our room. Xan began to take photos. He had a tiny camera chip implanted in his finger.



“Cool!” Morgan said. “Do you take photos of your bogeys?”

“Only babies do that,” said Zu.

Xan and Zu couldn’t believe our whiteboard. In their classrooms, they are surrounded by screens, sort of like big, flexible tablets. And at lunchtime, the kids play in a virtual theme park.

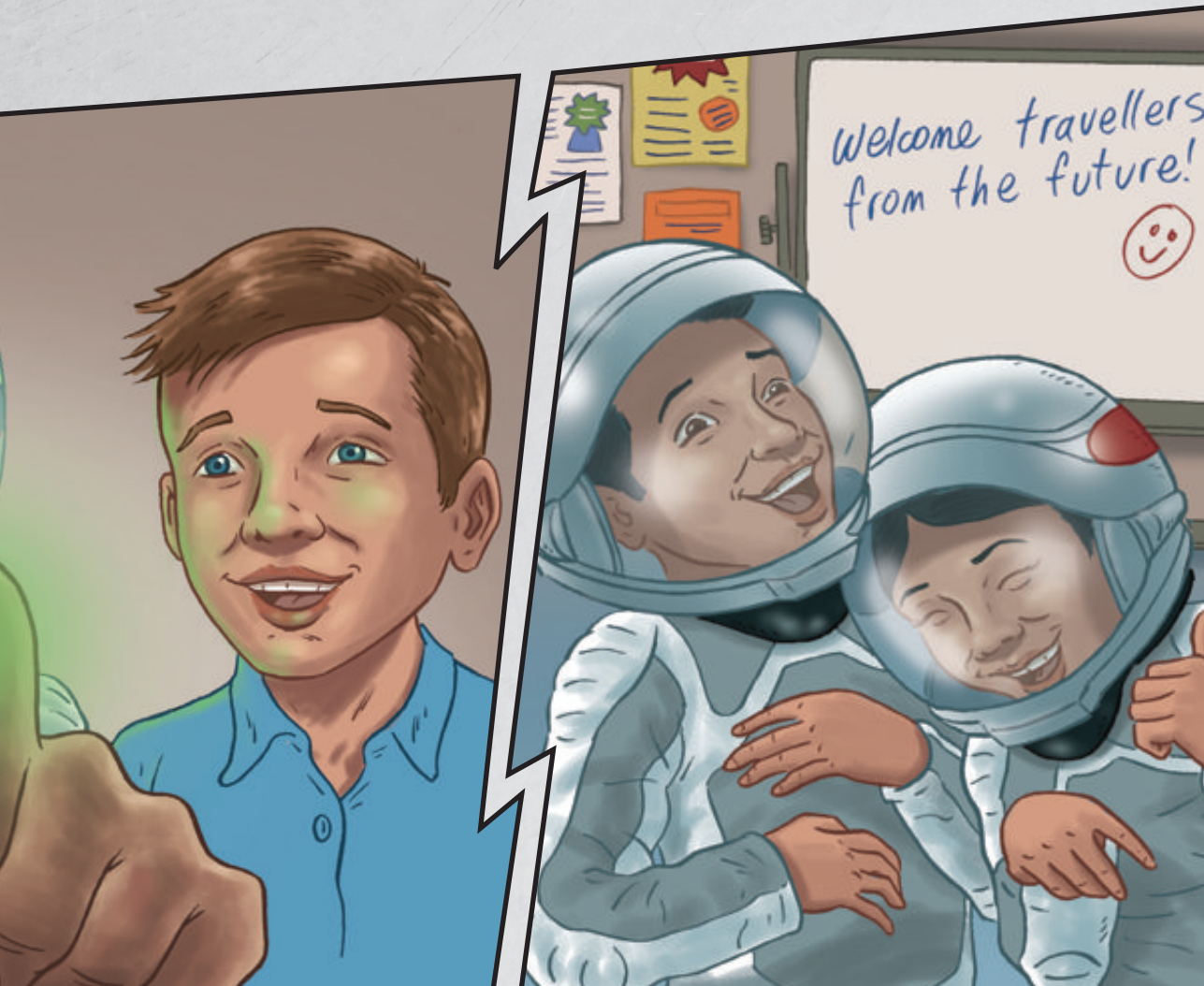
“Huh!” Morgan grumbled. “We only get swings and slides.”

Xan looked confused. “What is a slide?”

We drew one on a piece of paper. Xan and Zu laughed at our paper, too.

“Slides look dangerous,” said Zu.

“They’re not dangerous,” I said. “They’re fun! Come and see. We keep them outside.”



Mr Potts let us take the visitors out to the playground, even though it wasn't lunchtime yet. We have an awesome fort, with a slide and a rope ladder and a pole. Morgan climbed up the pole – to show the kids from the future what to do.

“We don't need to climb,” said Zu. She pointed to a button on her sleeve. “Our suits have anti-gravity. Watch this!” Zu pushed the button and shot into the air!

We played tag all around the fort. Xan and Zu floated into the air each time we were about to catch them. They laughed so hard their helmets fogged up.

Eventually, their teacher came running. “Children! Come down this moment. Your suits aren't meant for that. Besides, that structure looks very unsafe!”

“Olden days is fun,” said Zu.

“It's primitive!” said the teacher. “Wait till we get back. You can activate the theme park.”

The lunch bell rang, and all the little future kids came running. They stared up at the fort like they wanted to play on it, too.

“Time to go,” said the teacher. “Children, what do you say?”

“Thank you,” they chorused. Mrs Hayes took a photo using her tablet while Zu floated in the air behind us. Then Mr Potts made us sing the school song – and it was over. The time travellers got back in their future bus, we all waved, and they were gone. Morgan still insisted on calling them aliens.

Before they left, Zu gave me something. “We found this when we were learning about newspapers. We got it printed on old-fashioned paper for you.”

It was a photo of us, with Zu hovering in the background – the same picture Mrs Hayes had just taken! Above the photo was a headline: “Time Travellers? Or a Clever Fake?”





Wining's Wairau

The settler and his wife sit almost *in*
their fire – no woodburner with its safe glass door

through which to watch the flames. Mr Wining's
just returned from hunting, and his eager dog

waits to see what food might come
his way. Billowing smoke, a hanging pot and kettle

must mean dinner – there's no oven here –
and if you want to know what's next to eat,

then just look up to where
the still-bright birds and headless fish

dangle from the rafters. Corn, too, hangs there to dry –
I don't think there's a supermarket nearby.

For chairs, pull up a whalebone, or choose the floor,
and after dinner, we'll do a sketch in chalk
or draw a game of hangman on the wall.



Jenny Bornholdt





Up the Pipe

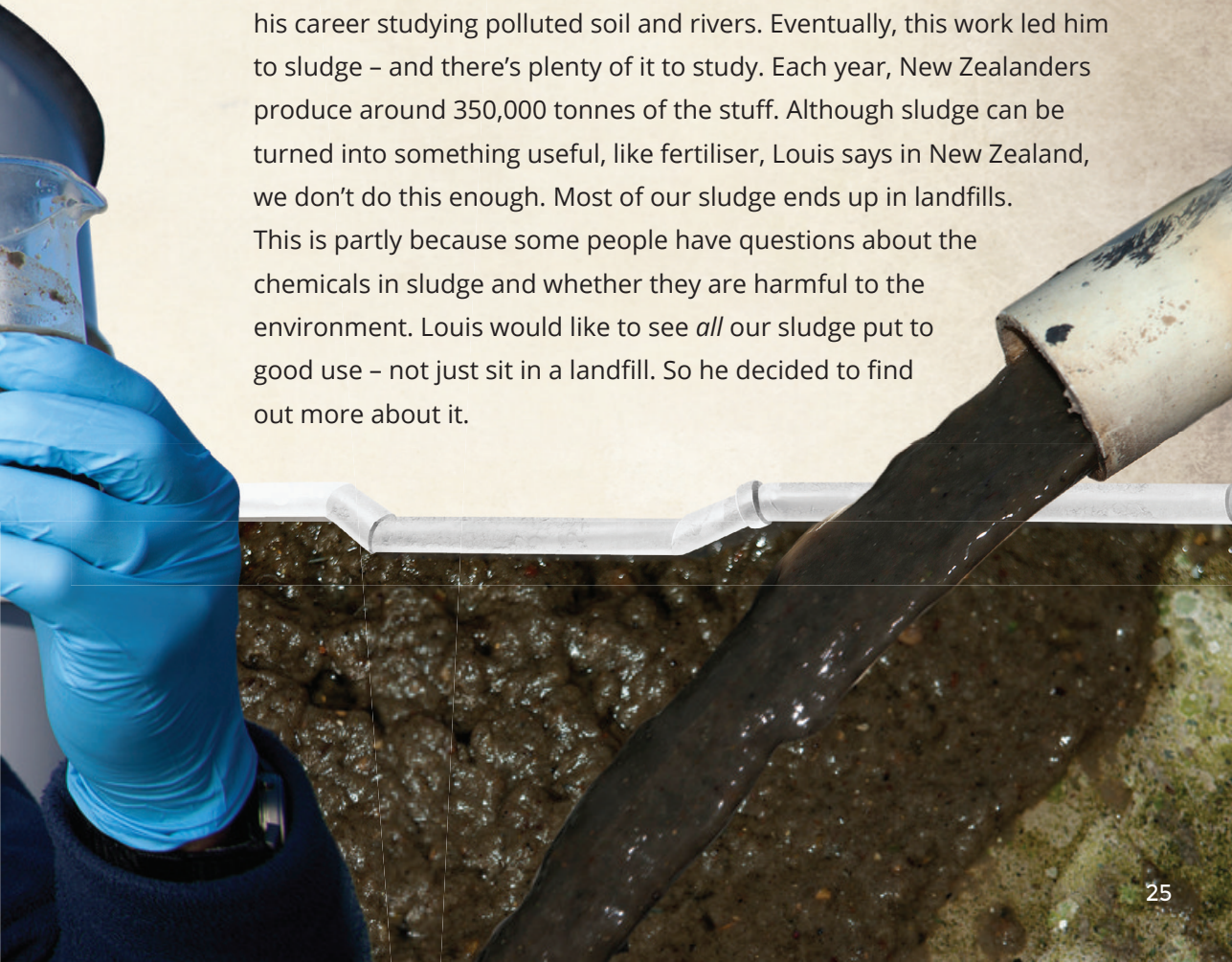
by Fiona Terry



You wouldn't expect something brown and slimy to be of much interest to anyone – especially when that brown, slimy stuff is what's left over after sewage has been treated. But some scientists are very interested in these leftovers (or sludge). And they're even willing to go out and get samples so they can take a closer look!

Tonnes of Sludge

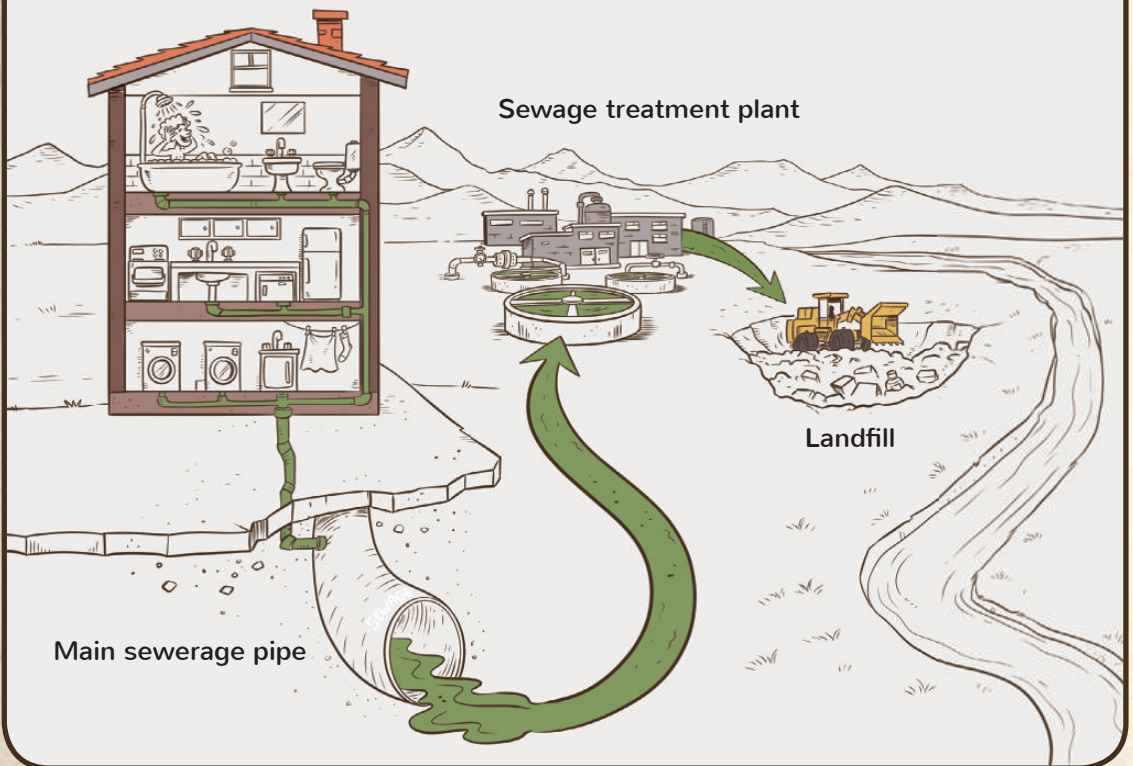
Doctor Louis Tremblay is an environmental toxicologist who began his career studying polluted soil and rivers. Eventually, this work led him to sludge – and there's plenty of it to study. Each year, New Zealanders produce around 350,000 tonnes of the stuff. Although sludge can be turned into something useful, like fertiliser, Louis says in New Zealand, we don't do this enough. Most of our sludge ends up in landfills. This is partly because some people have questions about the chemicals in sludge and whether they are harmful to the environment. Louis would like to see *all* our sludge put to good use – not just sit in a landfill. So he decided to find out more about it.



Everything Matters

A lot of the chemicals in sludge can be traced back to the things we wash down our drains. These include cleaning products, shampoo, conditioner, sunscreen, dishwashing liquid, insect repellent, liquid hand soap, moisturiser ... even toothpaste! As Louis explains: "All these things contain chemicals, and they all end up in the same place: the sewage treatment plant and then - most of the time - the landfill. Everything we flush down our drains matters. People think they're doing the right thing when they recycle a plastic container, but they don't realise that the contents of those containers might also be a problem."

From Sink to Sludge to Landfill



Louis had lots of questions. What chemicals, exactly, are turning up in our sludge? Which ones are the most toxic? What's their long-term impact on the environment? And most importantly, how can we reduce their use?

Louis could see that what he wanted to find out was a job for more than one scientist. The job required a team of them – with a variety of skills. So Louis began talking with other scientists, and together, they came up with a plan for a project. Louis believes that this teamwork makes all the difference. “If it were just toxicologists like me working on the project,” he says, “we’d miss out on a whole bunch of things, like connecting with the wider community to share our research. If you want your work to create change, then it really helps to work with others.”



The Project Team

Environmental chemist

runs tests to see what chemicals the sludge contains.

Environmental toxicologist

studies the toxicity or harmful effects of the chemicals.

Soil scientist runs tests to see what effects the sludge chemicals have on soil.

Microbiologist checks for germs that can cause disease.

Social scientist communicates with the public.

Cultural scientist makes sure that people from different cultural backgrounds are consulted in ways that best suit them.

Up the Pipe

The project was named Up the Pipe Solutions. This captured the way the team planned to work: from the sewage treatment plants, following the wastewater back up the pipes to people's houses. Now it was time to roll up their sleeves, peg their noses, and get to work.

Louis began by collecting sludge samples from different treatment plants. These samples were then tested. "We kept finding the same chemicals that caused us concern, including octyl methoxycinnamate, triclosan, and chloroxylenol," says Louis. These are not just a bunch of crazy names: they're all found in the products that we use every day, especially some sunscreens and anti-bacterial soaps.

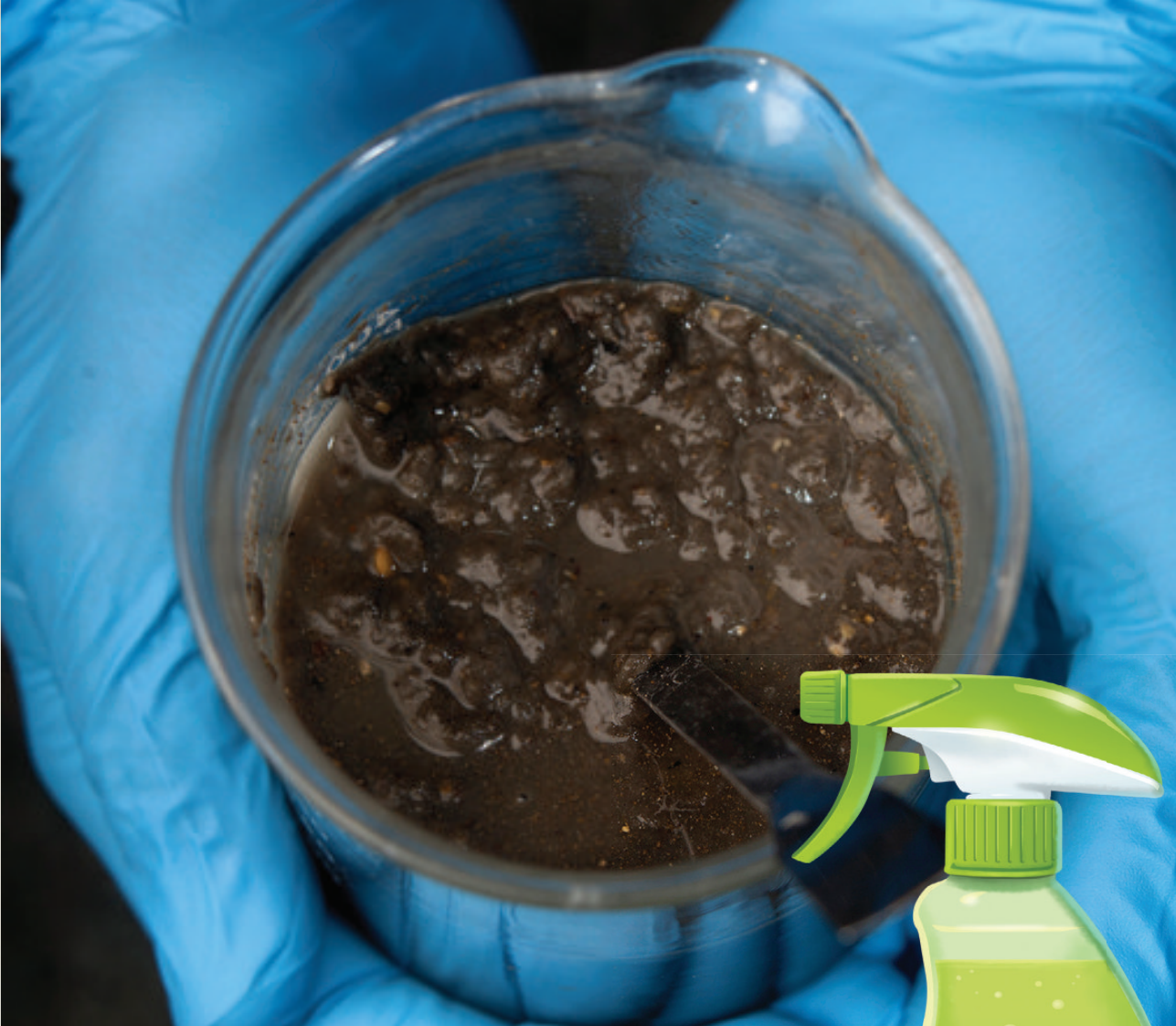
Another problem with the chemicals in sludge is that they can leach from the sewage treatment plants and landfills into our soil and waterways.

Louis again: "There's not much information about how these chemicals act once they're out in these places. We don't even really know what levels are safe."

One of the ways the team learnt more was by exposing sea urchin larvae to different chemical mixes. They plan to do similar tests with zebrafish embryos. "These creatures are considered the 'mice' of the aquatic world," explains Louis. "They help us to understand how toxic a chemical might be, as well as its long-term impact."

The research continues, and Louis and the team have high hopes. "The results from our work are vital – and already, we've learnt a great deal. Now people can know more about common household products and the chemicals they contain. This knowledge will help them to make better choices."





Other Culprits?

Louis and his team have studied lots of chemicals that they think may be harmful to the environment. Some of them have the potential to stick around for a long time – and we use them in large amounts. Start reading the labels on the products in your house and look out for the following. You might even feel inspired to make your own cleaning products (see pages 32–33).

Octyl methoxycinnamate
Triclosan
Chloroxylenol
Benzophenone
Propylparaben
2-Phenoxyethanol
2-Phenylphenol
4-Methylbenzylidene camphor
DEET



Making Better Choices

In the meantime, the Up the Pipe Solutions team continues its work outside the lab by taking workshops in the community. "This is the best part," says Louis. "Creating change." The workshops are very practical, with Louis providing recipes so that people can make their own environmentally friendly cleaning products. "These are what our grandparents used," he says, "so we thought why not use them again?"

Perhaps not surprisingly, Louis's recipes contain things you'll find in a kitchen pantry, not a science lab. Salt, baking soda, and vegetable oil are all on the list of ingredients.

At one of the workshops, at a Nelson school, students decided to test one of Louis's recipes on a pile of dirty dishes. One group used dishwashing liquid bought from a supermarket; the other used Louis's eco-friendly, home-made version. The students didn't know which liquid they were using, but the results were put to the vote, and the eco-friendly product won hands down.

So far, people have been keen to learn, which Louis finds very exciting. "Environmental toxicologists are often the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, cleaning up the mess. It makes a nice change to get in earlier – to stop the damage in the first place."

Every Little Change

Of course, some chemicals will always be helpful. Louis says that we just need to use them wisely – something we're not doing right now. "The chemical triclosan is amazing for fighting germs in hospitals, for example, but there's no place for it in our homes. That's just complete overkill."

Louis emphasises that every little change helps. Even just swapping from liquid soap to bars or using a smaller amount of shampoo can make a difference. "We can still keep ourselves and everything around us clean – let's just use fewer chemicals to do it," Louis suggests. "It's better for our sludge – and better for our planet."



How to Clean Green



Get clever and make your own greener cleaning products. The ingredients are all easy to find – most will be on the shelves at your local supermarket (although glycerine is usually found at a pharmacy).



Dishwasher powder

- 1 cup of washing soda
- 1 cup of baking soda
- 1/4 cup of citric acid
- 1/4 cup of salt

Mix the ingredients together and store in a sealed container or a jar with a lid. Use one tablespoon for each load of dishes. (And try white vinegar as a dishwasher rinse aid.)





Liquid soap

(This can be used for washing dishes. It also works well for hands or as a body wash in the shower.)

**1 cup of soap flakes or a grated soap bar
(try the big yellow blocks)**

1.5 litres of water

1 tablespoon of glycerine

Mix the ingredients together in a large saucepan over a low heat. Stir occasionally until the soap flakes have dissolved. Let the mixture cool overnight. Blend it with a stick blender or in a food processor until it's smooth. Pour into a suitable container.



Lemon sugar hand scrub

2½ cups of sugar

1 cup of vegetable oil*

4 tablespoons of lemon juice

Mix everything together and store. Rub some into your hands whenever they are extra dirty. Rinse it off with water.



*extra-virgin olive oil is best

The Pink Umbrella

by Lani Young

Sam shut his eyes and slumped in his seat, cringing. The kids in the front of the bus were laughing, and he had a hunch who they were laughing at.

“Look at that old lady’s umbrella!” someone said.

Sam jerked upright. Oh, no. She hasn’t! He looked. She had. This was worse than he’d thought. There at the bus stop was his grandmother with her new umbrella. The jumbo-sized one that was neon pink; the one she’d bought from the shop up the road, exclaiming “Oka, lima tala!” over the bargain price.

Sam shook his head in misery.

The other kids jostled and shoved to get off. But Sam took his time, dragging each foot. The driver gave him an irritated glance. “Hurry up, kid. I’ve got a schedule to keep.”

Off the bus, Sam walked even slower, head down ... waiting for the others to leave. “Samuelu, tope. Hurry up,” his grandmother called impatiently.

“Hi, Mama.”

She ignored his greeting, didn’t kiss him hello. She wasn’t that kind of grandmother. Instead, she grumbled about the grass stains on his shorts, his untucked shirt. She had other things to say, too. Especially about the girls who were walking ahead of them and laughing loudly. “Tautalaititi. So cheeky. Who are their parents?”

Sam didn’t answer. He was used to his grandmother’s comments. It had been three weeks since she’d come to live with them, and in that time, he’d learnt a lot. Like which of his grandmother’s questions he wasn’t meant to answer.





When their mother had told them that Mama was coming from Sāmoa, Sam and Mele had been excited.

“Good,” said Mele, poking her brother. “Now I won’t be stuck with you every afternoon.”

“Yeah, well I won’t have to eat your stink cooking.”

“Cut it out,” said Mum. “You’re lucky to have each other. And your grandmother will be a great help for me.” Sam felt a stab of guilt. His mum was a nurse and often worked extra shifts when the money from their dad didn’t come.

Mele rushed to reassure their mother. “It’s going to be awesome having Mama here.”

Sam agreed. Unlike Mele, he’d never been to Sāmoa and hadn’t met any of his mother’s family.

He imagined Mama would be like his best friend’s grandmother. It would be nice having someone live with them.

But Mama was nothing like Hunter’s grandmother. She insisted on calling him by his Samoan name - all the time. Mama also had lots of opinions. She said it was time her grandchildren spoke Samoan and decided the best way for them to learn was reading the Samoan Bible together - every night. “Samuelu, tapē le TV.” Sam never got to watch his favourite programmes any more, and he dreaded Saturdays. Mama would be up at dawn, cutting the grass in the front yard - with a bush knife. People driving past would stare at the old lady wielding a sapelu and wearing baggy sweatpants underneath her mu‘umu‘u.

The one silver lining in all of this misery was Mama's cooking. Instead of Mele's burnt toast and cold baked beans, dinner now was big pots of sapaui or fa'alifu. Mama made the best panipopo they'd ever tasted, trays of sticky sweet coconut buns that were even better with hot koko Sāmoa.

But still, Sam had decided sapaui and panipopo weren't a fair trade-off, especially when Mama insisted on walking him to the bus stop - and home again - each day. And now with her big pink umbrella! It was too much.

"She's ruining my life," Sam finally blurted to his sister.

Mele rolled her eyes. "Don't be a brat. Mama's fine."

"It's easy for you to say. She doesn't shame you in front of your friends," said Sam. "And I don't want to practise my Samoan every night."

Mele's eyes suddenly widened, and she shook her head. But Sam was on a roll. "It sucks. Things were better before Mama came. I wish she would go back to Sāmoa!"

"Shut up, you egg," hissed Mele.

There was a cold, heavy weight in the pit of Sam's stomach. He turned around slowly.

It was Mama, standing in the doorway. She'd heard every word. She looked angry. But more than that - she looked sad.



Mele put on a plastic smile and hustled Mama away. Sam felt sick. What had he done? He went to his room and lay on his bed. Guilt tasted like sour apples.

The next day, Sam didn't feel like eating breakfast. "Soccer practice," he said, leaving for school early. He kept thinking about what he'd said. He wanted to fix things but didn't know how.

When school finished, Sam missed the bus on purpose. Instead he hung around the sports field with Hunter, and they walked home together,

stopping to buy hot chips. They were outside the shop, licking salt off their burnt fingers, too eager to wait for the chips to cool, when Hunter stopped eating, a panicked look on his face.

"What?" asked Sam. He followed Hunter's gaze to three boys in high school uniforms who were coming towards them.

One of the boys laughed loudly and quickened his pace. "Got any money?" he said. "We're hungry."

"Yeah," added another. "Those chips look good."



The trio surrounded Sam and Hunter. The first boy, who seemed to be the leader, bumped against Sam, making him drop the chips. The boys laughed.

“What’s the matter?” the leader said. “You should be more careful. See what you did? What a waste.” Sam clenched his fists by his sides but didn’t say anything. He wished he’d just gotten on the bus.


A voice came from somewhere behind them. “What are you doing to my grandson?” It was Mama, brandishing her pink umbrella, in warrior mode. “Get away from those kids!” She advanced. “Shame on you.

Who are your parents? Alu ese mai i! Get away from here!” Mama continued with her tirade, this time shouting in Samoan as she used the umbrella to jab in the direction of the offenders. Sam didn’t understand all the words, but he was pretty sure he wouldn’t find them in the Bible.

The older boys were too stunned to do more than scuttle out of the way, half-laughing in disbelief. When Mama was satisfied her point had been made, she set off down the street, with a brusque command for Sam and Hunter. “Home.”







“Is that your grandmother?” Hunter whispered to Sam, amazed.

“Yes,” admitted Sam. People had come out of the shop to look at the spectacle, and he was embarrassed.

“Awesome,” said Hunter. “My grandmother would never do that.”

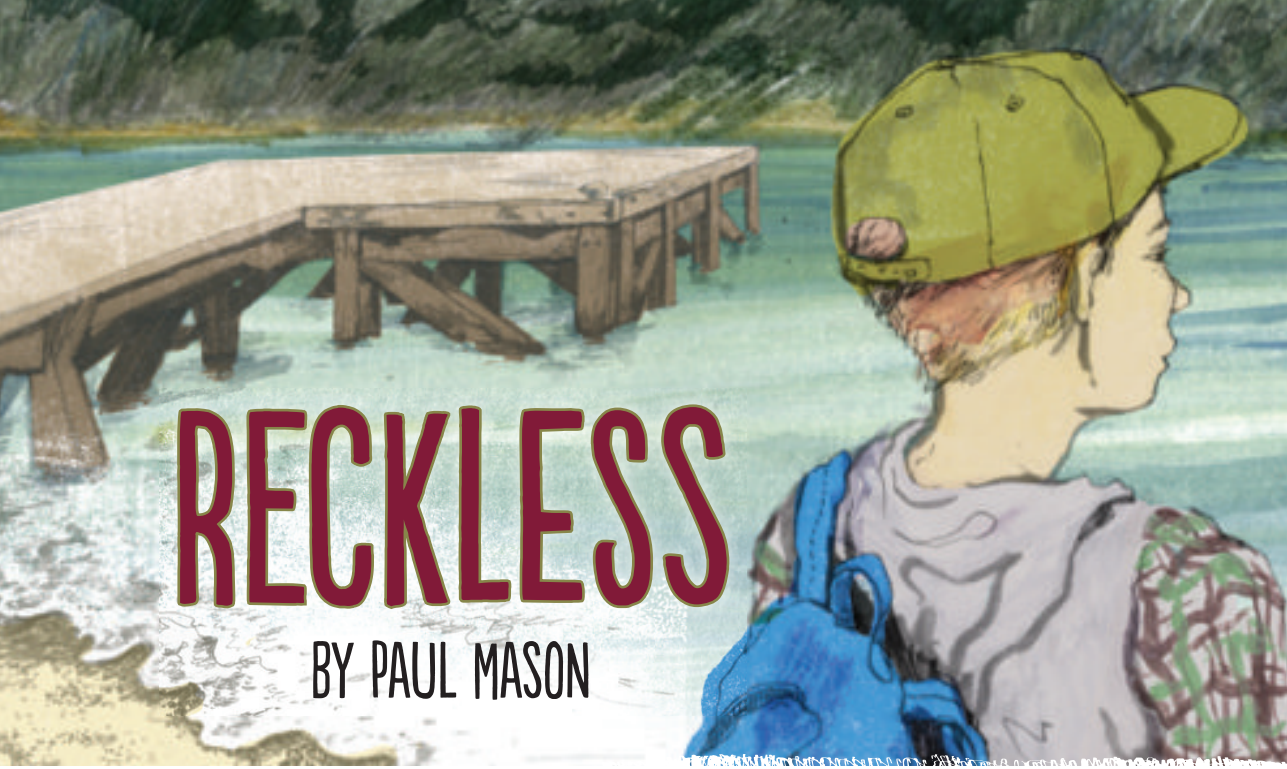
Sam looked at the old lady striding ahead of them, still muttering about disrespectful teenagers. Hunter was right. Mama was one of a kind.

After Hunter had turned off, Mama and Sam continued together in silence. Finally, Sam blurted, “I’m sorry, Mama. About what I said yesterday.”

Mama stopped to look at him. “You are a good boy, Samuelu.” She didn’t touch him, but her eyes were kind. “Learn more fa’aaloalo. Respect.” Then she pinched his upper arm and frowned. “And eat more kalo. You are too skinny. Grow and those boys won’t bother you. Tomorrow I’ll teach you how to sāsā the vao with the sapelu. Good exercise. It makes big muscles.”

They walked on as the afternoon sky darkened with approaching rain. Mama noticed and opened her umbrella. She handed it to Sam. “Here, you can hold it for us.”

Sam glanced around, checking for people on the street. “OK, Mama,” he said.



RECKLESS

BY PAUL MASON

Kane took the long way home from school – around the bay. He dragged his feet, putting it off as long as he could. By the old wharf, he stopped to pick out rocks: flat ones for skimming, the stones warm. It took a few tries to get one to jump. The stone leaped over the swell like a kahawai.

Then Kane’s eyes were drawn across the water, out beyond the few boats moored in the bay. Some people were flopping around in the sea by the headland. Shrieking and laughing, the sound carried in broken pieces on the wind. A wave of worry flowed through Kane’s chest. Did they know what was below them, gliding in the shadows?

Kane knew. He’d been out with Uncle Max in his tinny last month. Uncle Max had taken some of his friends fishing. Kane had baited hooks and washed down the boat afterwards for pocket money. When Uncle Max had dropped anchor to gut the fish they’d caught, the sharks came up quick. Maybe four, maybe more – it was hard to tell because they were circling. Bronzies nearly as long as the tinny was wide. Right there, by the headland. Exactly where the swimmers were now.

“Do the sharks always come?” one of Uncle Max’s friends had asked.

“We all clean our fish here,” Uncle Max had replied. “They come.”



Kane felt the fear again. He thought of the way those sharks had made short work of the fish bits. Heads, tails, guts ... all disappearing into gulping mouths. The bronzies had fought, too. Ramming heads, forcing each other out of the water, their powerful tails whipping up the surface. The people out there now had no idea they were swimming in the feeding spot. Of course they didn't. They weren't from around here. Their launch was big and white, with flash tinted windows.

Kane waved his arms and called out. Even though he felt stupid, he yelled "Shark!" – like he was in a movie. But the onshore wind pushed against him, and Kane's words died as soon as they left his mouth. The swimmers couldn't hear him; hadn't seen him either. Kane looked for someone to share the worry, but he was alone.

Now he felt angry. Was it his job to warn the visitors? He could walk away, pretend he hadn't seen them – easy as. That's what people would expect him to do, right? Kane Smith, always a bit unreliable. A bit reckless. Maybe the bronzies wouldn't be interested in the swimmers?

Kane shook his head. It wasn't worth risking.

Maybe he could follow the track out to the headland, then pick his way down the grassy slope. He could call to the swimmers from there. But that would take ages. Kane pictured limbs churning the water. Had the bronzies picked up the splashing yet? Were they already coming?

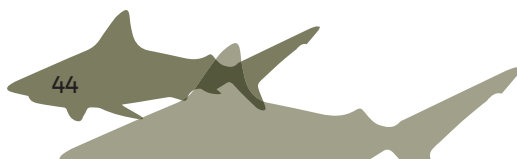
There were half a dozen dinghies upturned at the far end of the bay, chained to trees leaning over the sand. There had to be one that was loose. Then he could get out into the bay. Get close enough to shout.

In the middle of the huddle, there was an old wooden dinghy secured by a greasy rope. Kane flipped it over. The dinghy was pretty beat up, but it looked safe enough. There were oars, along with a life jacket, tucked inside. Kane was pretty sure the owner wouldn't mind – and he'd put the dinghy back exactly like he'd found it. Besides, it would only take ten minutes.

A scream from the bay – a child's scream – caught on the wind and made Kane spin round. He paused, throat tight. But then came laughter. They were all right, still.

Kane dragged the dinghy down to the shore, the cool water splashing over his jandals. He pulled on the life jacket, pushed off, and clambered in. The bay looked heaps bigger from the water. But the oars felt strong in his hands, and Kane leaned forward, then back, feeling them pull through the water. He tried not to think about sharks, their bronze backs arching, pale fins cutting the water ... the slits of their mouths lined with strips of teeth.

Kane looked to see how far he'd come. He was about halfway. The people were still in the water. Kane could see they were a family. A mother and a father and two kids. Just a little farther, then they would hear him. He picked up his pace, finding a rhythm, leading the dinghy through the boats.







A few more strokes, and Kane turned again. "Hey!" he called. Kane pulled in the oars. "Hey!" he called, louder this time and waving. Now the father raised his arm to wave back. Kane took a deep breath.

"Sharks!" he yelled. He chopped straight arms together like jaws. "Sharks there!"

At first, Kane didn't think they'd understood. Then he saw the father point back to the launch, heard the bark in his voice. The family swam rapidly for the diving platform. Kane watched as they climbed out of the water, the kids hugging themselves with thin arms, the mother quick with the towels. Kane let out a long breath. They were OK.

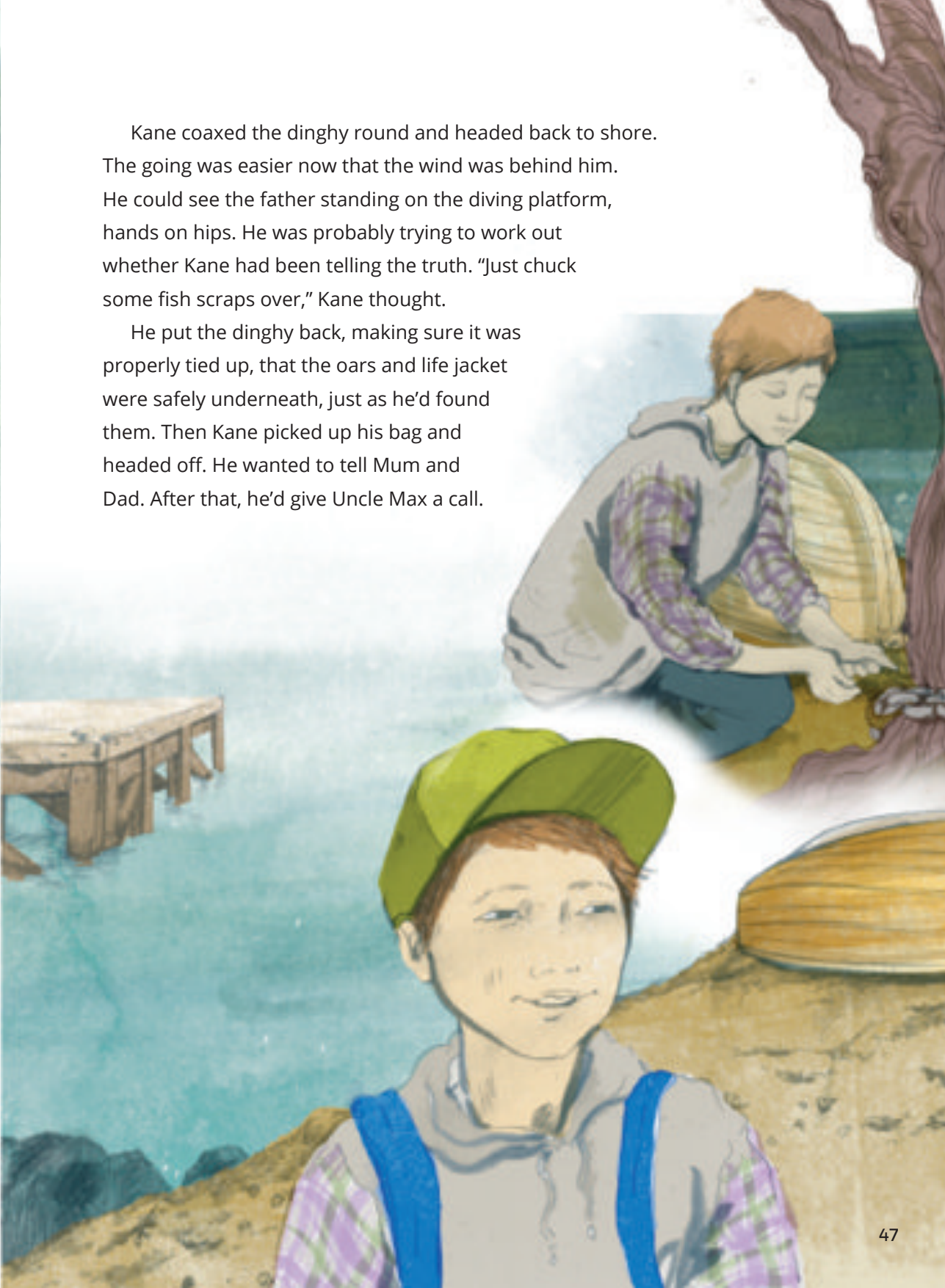
Then the father cupped his hands and called. "Are you sure?"

"Real sure!" Kane yelled back. "Feeding spot," he added. The father nodded.



Kane coaxed the dinghy round and headed back to shore. The going was easier now that the wind was behind him. He could see the father standing on the diving platform, hands on hips. He was probably trying to work out whether Kane had been telling the truth. "Just chuck some fish scraps over," Kane thought.

He put the dinghy back, making sure it was properly tied up, that the oars and life jacket were safely underneath, just as he'd found them. Then Kane picked up his bag and headed off. He wanted to tell Mum and Dad. After that, he'd give Uncle Max a call.



But when he got home, his father didn't want to know. He sat there in his work socks and shorts, holding up a wide hand, killing the stream of words from Kane's mouth. Just like the wind on the shore.

"Let's have it," he said.

"Dad, you should have seen –" but his father shook his head. With a sigh, Kane unzipped his bag and handed over his report.

His father skimmed the cover, then turned to the comments at the back. He finished reading, his jaw clenching a little. Then he dropped the report on the table with a grunt.

Kane hung his head. "Not good?" he asked – even though he could guess.

Dad frowned at him. "When are you going to step up, son?" His voice was weary. "When? That's what I want to know." His father pushed himself up from the table, leaving the report there for Mum to find ... leaving Kane alone in the kitchen, his story about the bronzies already fading.

illustrations by Rebecca ter Borg



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