

The Stars of Matariki

Large/Entire School Script

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The Stars of Matariki is dedicated
to Jenny & Laughton Patrick

Plot Summary

First Half

A fictional school (Northpoint Primary) is going on an overnight marae visit. For many of the children this is their first contact with a traditional marae environment, so a sense of uncertainty is felt within the group. To allay their fears, the children have been given clear assurances by their teachers, that the marae has free Wi-Fi and that all of their technology can be taken on the visit (phones, 3D-goggles, watch phones).

The visit starts well, as the children are welcomed onto the marae (**Song 1. Tūrangawaewae**). The kaumātua explain how life on the marae is led by the Māori calendar (**Song 2. Maramataka**). But as night falls, a severe storm is brewing (**Song 3. The Storm – instrumental/dance**). An explosion can be heard and all the lights across the city go out. Wi-Fi and mobile communications are lost at the marae. After the initial panic settles, a sense of calm comes over the children as they relax into the arms of life on the marae.

Everyone goes outside and sits around a newly lit fire. The kaumātua introduce the children to 'Māori TV' (the night sky). The importance of the stars in terms of navigating the oceans and life are discussed. This leads up to the kaumātua outlining the central importance of the Stars of Matariki (**Song 4. Star of the Show**).

The narrators (Ranginui, Papatūānuku and Tāwhirimātea) introduce the concept of whānau to the audience and this leads to an introduction of the Matariki whānau of stars and the functions they perform (**Song 5. The Stars of Matariki**). Subsequently the astronomers (Tohunga kōkōrangī) explain how the rising of Matariki signals the beginning of the Māori year and that it is a time for remembrance (**Song 6. Remembrance Song - instrumental**) and celebration (**Song 7. Matariki Atua**).

Second half

The kaumātua recount to the children, the little-known story of Haunui's efforts to take over and rename Matariki as 'Haunuiville'.

Haunui grew up in the rough outskirts of the Matariki constellation. His lack of education and manners is only surpassed by his blind ambition to make his mark on the universe. He plans to replace the traditional system of bartering and reciprocity with trading tiakarete (chocolate) instead (**Song 8. Tiakarete**). Ironically, Haunui is lactose intolerant and eating his beloved tiakarete causes a great deal of flatulence.

His plan is going well, until one of his bogan companions accidentally reveals his traitorous plan. As a consequence, he is cast from the whānau and left devastated that his shadow side has caused him to act so poorly (**Song 9. Shadow Dance – instrumental/dance**). He sends a video message to the Matariki whānau apologising for the hurt he has caused.

However, Haunui's science advisers (Team Smarty Pants) introduce Plan B – for Haunui to become the 10th star of Matariki. Team Smarty Pants outline the clever plan to grow Haunui's size (eat a great deal of Tiakarete leading to a massive increase in gas). Unfortunately, Haunui has not learned from his previous mistake. With his ambition re-kindled, he sets off on his new quest for recognition. (**Song 10. Never Gonna Give It Up**).

Sadly, the gas build-up plan works too well and Haunui grows so large that he explodes. The Matariki whānau hear the explosion and their worst fears are confirmed when a shower of stardust falls around them. Matariki plays her whānau the video she received from Haunui. His backstory and sincere apology soften their hearts towards him. They mourn his passing (**Song 11. Stardust**).

Rehua (Great Lord of the Stars) empathises with his wife and children and eases their grieving by using his power to reincarnate Haunui (**Song 12. Raising of Haunui-instrumental/dance**). However, due to Haunui's foolishness and blind ambition in trying to become the largest star in the Matariki constellation, Rehua brings him back to life as a Kaumātua to teach humility and peace to those on earth.

As the marae visit is coming to an end, one of the kaumātua is revealed as Haunui. Following many years of teaching on the marae, Haunui's poutama (learning journey) is complete and he returns to Matariki as a star. The cast join together to sing the finale (**Song 13. Hoki Tū Mai**).

Main Characters

Name	Brief description	Scenes
Nanny Āniwaniwa (Kaumātua)	A kindly Māori elder who gently encourages the children to embrace Te Āo Māori (Āniwaniwa means rainbow in Te Reo Māori)	1,2,3,4,5,9,12
Koro Ken (Kaumātua)	Koro Ken teaches the children about the Poutama and other aspects of Te Āo Māori. He is kind and patient with the children.	1,2,3,4,5,9,12
Principal Pat (School Principal)	A leader who is certain of her opinion (even though it often gets her into trouble). She is doing her best to embrace Te Āo Māori and learn some Te Reo Māori.	1,3,5,9,12
Ranginui (Joint Narrator)	Sky Father (Ranginui and Papatūānuku were separated by their children near the dawn of time).	1,2,3,6,7,9,11,12
Papatūānuku (Joint Narrator)	Earth Mother. She is beautiful but is concerned that her looks are fading, as the ravages of human pollution take their toll.	1,2,3,7,9,11,12
Tāwhirimātea (Joint Narrator)	God of the weather. When his siblings separated Ranginui and Papatūānuku, he was very angry with them and in a fit of rage tore out his eyes and threw them into the sky (where they became the stars of Matariki). He wears dark sunglasses and takes a taiaha (a spear painted white with a red tip) when he moves around.	1,2,3,6,7,9,11,12
Aroha (School Pupil)	A child who has been brought up to embrace the Māori and Pakeha worlds. Principal Pat relies on her as an unofficial cultural adviser.	1,2,3,4,5,9,12
Pradeep (School pupil)	A very intellectual child who is unswayed by any threats to his logic e.g., legends or myths.	1,2,3,4,5,9,12
Marsha (School Pupil)	Daughter of Imogen (Parent Helper). She comes up with some 'left field' answers to questions.	1,2,3,4,5,9,12
Classmates (School Pupils)	Up to 10 children can join the class group whenever Aroha, Pradeep and Marsha are in a scene. Non-speaking parts.	1,2,3,4,5,9,12
Imogen Fernsby (Parent Helper)	A slightly absent-minded parent. She has five children (including Marsha) and is always trying to find peace and	1,2,3,4,5,9,12

	solitude amongst the chaos of family life. (non-speaking part)	
Tohunga kōkōrangī 1	An elderly person who is very quiet and considered with the trainees.	6
Tohunga kōkōrangī 2	The younger of the tohunga kōkōrangī. Slightly more exuberant.	6
Tohunga kōkōrangī trainee 1	An enthusiastic student who will soon become a fully-fledged tohunga kōkōrangī.	6
Tohunga kōkōrangī trainee 2	An elderly person who is very quiet and considered with the trainees.	6
Haunui (Star)	A 'rough diamond' who was brought up 'on the streets' in the outskirts of the constellation. His blind ambition for recognition combined with his arrogance lead to many troubles. He has a mullet haircut which he tries to disguise when he is acting 'sophisticated'.	7,8,9
Rehua (Father of the Matariki whānau)	Cares deeply for his family but his role as 'Great Lord of the Stars' keeps him very busy.	11
Matariki (Mother of the Matariki whānau)	A caring mother with a soft heart. She is very protective of her whānau.	7,8,10,11
Tupuānuku (Matariki whānau)	Represents food grown from the soil.	7,8,10,11
Tupuārangi (Matariki whānau)	Associated with food from the sky e.g., birds and fruit/berries from trees	7,8,10,11
Waipunarangi (Matariki whānau)	Represents 'sky waters'. We learn from her the importance of sharing our gifts with others.	7,8,10,11
Waitī (Matariki whānau)	Oversees the rivers and lakes and encourages us to listen and learn from them.	7,8,10,11
Waitā (Matariki whānau)	Represents the oceans (and kai that comes from the ocean). She encourages us to treat the inhabitants of the ocean as the treasures that they are.	7,8,10,11
Ururangi (Matariki whānau)	Encourages us to embrace the strength of the wind and prepare for any challenges it creates.	7,8,10,11
Pōhutukawa (Matariki whānau)	Connects us with those who have passed on.	7,8,10,11
Hiwa i te rangi (Matariki whānau)	The youngest of the Matariki whānau. She is the wishing star. Māori send her their dreams and wishes for the year.	7,8,10,11

SCENE 1 – The Pōwhiri

Scene opens with the three narrators sitting at a desk like sports commentators. Papatūānuku is on the left, Tāwhirimātea is in the middle and Ranginui is on the right. They are watching a screen in front of them, but the audience can't see what is on the screen.

Ranginui: Haere mai – welcome. Welcome to the ‘The Stars of Matariki’. Ko Ranginui taku ingoa. My name is Ranginui, the Skyfather.

Papatūānuku: Kia ora – hello. Ko Papatūānuku taku ingoa. My name is Papatūānuku, and I am Earth Mother. *(Turning to Tāwhirimātea with a smile on her face).* And this is Tāwhirimātea, our son and God of the Weather. *(She then cups her hand to indicate she is sharing a secret).* He’s a good son, very loving and loyal to us... but he does have an anger problem.

Tāwhirimātea: *(With frustration)* I’m blind not deaf, I can still hear what you’re saying! *(In an angry tone)* AND I DON’T HAVE AN ANGER PROBLEM!

Ranginui: If you say so Son... Papatūānuku and I were violently separated by our other sons near the dawn of time. Tāwhirimātea was so angry at his brothers, he tore out his own eyes and threw them into the heavens.

Papatūānuku: And his eyes became the stars of Matariki.

Ranginui: We are your narrators for today’s show. In front of us we have a control screen that enables us to move fluidly back and forward in time.

Papatūānuku: That’s not a problem for Māori. Ka mua, ka muri.

Ranginui: The past can be in front of us and the future behind us.

Papatūānuku: Anyway, this is your story Tāwhirimātea – where do you want to start?

Tāwhirimātea: Turn the settings to yesterday at 1pm, when the rather reluctant school group from *(insert name of your school)* arrived at Waihurihuri Marae.

Papatūānuku touches the screen and makes an announcement.

Papatūānuku: Setting for 1pm yesterday entered and confirmed.



A spiral time warp video plays on the screen

CURTAINS OPEN

The school party are about to welcomed onto the marae in the pōwhiri ceremony. The teachers and parents are attentive to the welcoming party, but the children start to get out their technology (phones, 3D goggles, iPads etc) to play with. They are stopped in their tracks when the welcoming group start to sing. Principal Pat instructs them to put their devices away immediately. The children reluctantly do so.

The welcoming group are dressed in black clothing. In the 1st verse the groups are separate with the welcoming group inside the entrance of the marae and the school group are just outside. During the first verse a member of the welcoming group lays down a challenge by carrying a taiaha and laying down a small branch in front of Principal Pat, who picks it up by the end of the verse.

In the first chorus, the school group come onto the marae. The welcoming group include actions in the chorus to underscore “Tūrangawaewae – the land where we stand” e.g., stamping feet and standing tall. “He mahi tahi tātou” (we must stand together) e.g., by inviting the school group to stand beside them. “Mo te oranga – o te katoa” (for the wellbeing of all), e.g., linking arms and standing tall together.

In verse two the welcoming group has a member demonstrate/mime each of the pōwhiri actions. The final verse has the school group join in all the actions with the welcoming group.



Tūrangawaewae

Verse 1

Haere mai – welcome, haere mai – welcome

This is our world - Te Aō Māori

Tiritiri – te mātauranga

Together, sharing our knowledge and our history oh, oh, oh

Chorus

Tūrangawaewae – (echo - tūrangawaewae)

The place where we stand (echo - the place where we stand)

Me mahi tahi tātou (we must stand together)

Mo te oranga – o te katoa (for the wellbeing of all)

Verse 2

Karanga – calling, Whaikōrero – speeches

Waiata’s the song -koha your gift

Harirū – shaking hands, Hākari – feasting

Now we’ve shared them all – that’s our Pōwhiri oh, oh, oh

Chorus

Principal Pat: *(Addressing the welcoming party on behalf of the school party)* Tēnā koutou. Thank you to everyone. That was truly amazing. *(Turning to the children)* Wasn't that amazing children?

Children *(all together and in a monotone):* Yes, Principal Pat.

Welcome group 1: You are all very welcome.

Welcome group 2. Today the pōwhiri is ceremonial, but in the past, it played an important role in daily life.

Welcome group 3. It was used whenever two groups came together.

Welcome group 4. The groups used the pōwhiri to figure out how they would work together.

Welcome group 5. And it was also a spiritual journey.

Welcome group 6. Where gods are acknowledged.

Welcome group 7. Ancestors remembered, and ancestral ties reinforced.

Welcome group 8. And at the end of the ceremony the guests would join their hosts as one.

Welcome group 9. The pōwhiri ceremony has made you noa.

Welcome group 10. That means you are free from restrictions to be on our marae.

Pradeep. Awesome! – now can we log onto the marae Wi-Fi?

Principal Pat: *(To the welcoming group with some embarrassment)* I'm sorry, but we did promise the children some technology time after the pōwhiri – is that OK?

Nanny Āniwaniwa: Āe – yes- the password is 'Maramataka'. *(The letters are spelled out for the children)* M A R A M A T A K A.

Marsha: That's a funny word, what does it mean?

Nanny Āniwaniwa: Maramataka is our calendar... *(the children ignore the answer as they dive onto their devices, log on and become completely transfixed).*

Principal Pat: Perhaps we could learn about Maramataka AFTER technology time?

Koro Ken: Āe - yes. Not much chance at the moment!

SCENE 2- Maramataka

The scene opens with the narrators looking at their smart phones. Papatūānuku is looking wistfully at an old photo of herself.

Ranginui: *(To Papatūānuku)* What are you looking at?

Papatūānuku: Some old photos of me – I was holding my age really well until ... *(her voice tails off)*

Tāwhirimātea: Until?

Papatūānuku. Well for many millions of years, after the dawn of time, things were great, but these last 200 years *(she takes a photo and shakes her head looking at it)* ... pollution, mining, deforestation – they sure have taken their toll.

Tāwhirimātea: You still look great to me, Mum!

Papatūānuku: Oh, thanks Son, that's very comforting. Of course, it would mean even more if you could actually see! What do you think Ranginui – am I showing my age?

Ranginui: *(A look of fear comes over his face because he doesn't want to answer the question honestly – he tries to distract Papatūānuku instead).* Ah... ah... I've just had word through my earpiece that they are beginning to discuss the Maramataka, the Māori calendar, down on the marae. Why don't we come back to your question a little later?

Tāwhirimātea: Maramataka..., that reminds me, I've got to pop out for a bit. I could be late so don't wait up for me.

Tāwhirimātea gets up and leaves.

Ranginui: OK Son – take care.

The scene turns to the inside of the whareniwi where the children are sitting in front of Nanny Āniwaniwa and Koro Ken.

Nanny Āniwaniwa: What do you know about Maramataka?

Aroha: I know that Marama is the moon in Māori.

Nanny Āniwaniwa: Ka pai - very good. Marama is the moon in Te Reo Māori. And that is a very good clue to understanding the heart of the Maramataka.

(The phases of the moon dancers come onto stage. They are wearing black T shirts with white moon shapes on them. Each is different to represent the 30 phases of the moon in a month).

Koro Ken: Titiro! - look – here are the phases of the moon – let's see what they have to tell us about the Maramataka.

Moon phase 1: The Maramataka is the Māori calendar, and it is based around us -the cycles of the moon.

Moon phase 2: We don't have days of the week.

Moon phase 3: We have phases of the moon.

Moon phase 4: There are 30 of us.

Moon phase 5: We signal good times for planting, fishing, working, and resting.

Moon phase 6: Every night of the month is named after a different star.

Moon phase 7: Today is Tamatea – kai ariki.

Moon phase 8: Tamatea is another name for Tāwhirimātea – God of the Weather.

Moon phase 9: Best you keep a watchful eye at this time because the weather is often unsettled.

Moon phase 10: Tāwhirimātea is well known for his bad temper – when he's angry he's very destructive.

Koro Ken: Āe – yes- he certainly has some serious anger issues.

Tāwhirimātea: (*His voice is heard from behind the stage*) I don't have anger issues!

Marsha. Who was that?

Koro Ken: It sounded like Tāwhirimātea. I'll go and check (*he leaves to go outside*).

Nanny Āniwaniwa: Anyway, back to our Maramataka. We don't just have months in our calendar, we also have years. Who knows how we might measure a year?

Marsha: With a ruler?

The children snigger into their hands

Nanny Āniwaniwa: Good on you for being brave enough to give an answer Marsha. We do measure lots of things with rulers, but a year isn't one of them. Would anyone else like to have a guess?

The children look blankly.

Nanny Āniwaniwa: We measure it the same as the modern calendar – a year is the time it takes for the earth to go around the sun. So, our Maramataka is a combination of the cycle of the moon going around the earth, and the earth around the sun.

The phases of the moon gather in a circle to perform the song. In the chorus, they move smoothly in a large circle counter clockwise, moving their arms and bodies rhythmically to suggest a natural (rather than a mechanistic) movement. In the verses they mimic a classroom situation, with one phase of the moon acting as the teachers and the others writing note on imaginary pads.

During the instrumental the lights change to illuminate the T shirts (could be ultra-violet light if available) or lower the lights to reveal a glow on the phases of moon). The lights then return fully for the chorus and outro.



Maramataka

CHORUS

You'll hear no – no clock ticking

Maramataka has - its own rhythm

No right or wrong – just shades of different

Maramataka has its - own rhythm

Verse 1

A day's when the earth spins once

No heavenly reason for a week – so we've none

Marama circles the earth in a month

It takes a year for the earth to orbit the sun

CHORUS

Verse 2

We only give names to the night

The first is Whero when there's no moon in sight

Turu's a time to collect from the sea

Ōhua's a good day for working

CHORUS

Instrumental

CHORUS

Outro

A day's when the earth spins once

No heavenly reason for a week – so we've none

Marama circles the earth in a month

It takes a year for the earth to orbit the sun.

SCENE 3- The Storm

Nanny Āniwaniwa and Koro Ken are with the school group sitting in front of a large tukutuku panel. The distant sound of wind can be heard. The stage is set so that there is also a large area for the storm dancers to perform later in the scene. Papatūānuku and Ranginui are sitting out the front and there is an empty chair where Tāwhirimātea had been sitting earlier.

Ranginui: I don't like the look of this, Papatūānuku. Tāwhirimātea's out and about, and I can see a storm building in the west.

Papatūānuku: Āe – yes, the signs do look ominous. Let's distract ourselves by seeing what is happening down on the marae.

Ranginui: Good idea.

The lights move to illuminate the school group. They are sitting with the Nanny Āniwaniwa and Koro Ken in front of the tukutuku panels in the whareniui.

Koro Ken: We're going to look at some of the ways learning is represented in Te Āo Māori. (*Pointing to the tukutuku panel in front of the children*). Who can tell me what we call this panel?

Aroha: Isn't that a tukutuku?

Koro Ken: Ka pai – very good Aroha

Nanny Āniwaniwa: This tukutuku panel is called a Poutama or the stairway of excellence. The kākaho, or riser between the steps, represents the knowledge that students bring to learning.

Koro Ken: The kaho, or step symbolises the contribution of your mentor or teacher. Each step is made up of stitches that represent building new skills.

Nanny Āniwaniwa: Today we have been helping you ascend one staircase on the Poutama as you learn about our Maramataka.

Koro Ken: But there are many staircases that you will need to ascend in life. Each generation must strive for excellence, so that they can build and pass on wisdom to the next generation.

Nanny Āniwaniwa: Thank you Koro Ken. (*Looking at the children*). Does anyone have any questions so far?

Pradeep: (*Puts hand in the air*) When is it technology time again?

Nanny Āniwaniwa: I was meaning questions relating to Maramataka...

Aroha puts her hand in the air.

Principal Pat: (*To Aroha*) Aroha is your question related to Maramataka or the Poutama?

Aroha: Āe - yes. How do you know when a year has passed by?

Principal Pat: EXCELLENT QUESTION! *(Followed by a dawning realisation that she doesn't know the answer either).* The earth is always orbiting the sun so... how do you know when the old year finishes and the new year begins?

Marsha: *(Puts hand in the air and calls out)* Because there would be fireworks, and everyone would be having a party!

All the children laugh at another 'left field' answer of Marsha's.

Koro Ken: I like your thinking, and yes, we do have a celebration. Our new year begins when the star cluster called Matariki appears in the north-eastern sky. That happens in our month of Pipiri - mid-June.

The sound of wind can be heard getting louder outside. A small group of three storm dancers come into the marae through the open door and circle the room before leaving.

Koro Ken: Quickly close the door. 'Everyone check the windows are closed too!' It looks like Tāwhirimātea is set to unleash his anger. There's a big storm on the way!

Principal Pat: *(To Koro Ken and Nanny Āniwaniwa)* How about we give the children some technology time to distract them and keep them busy?

Koro Ken and Nanny Āniwaniwa (Together): Āe!



The Storm (instrumental)

The storm begins quietly with a few storm dancers dressed in tie-died flowing material and holding hand scarves moving in a smooth flowing line around the stage. As the music builds, more storm dancers appear (in darker clothing), and the movements become more extreme (to emphasise the power of the storm that is building). They demonstrate their destructive power by blowing over a tree. Tāwhirimātea can be seen circling the dancers and giving them instructions with his taiaha. He gives a command to the dancers, and they all fall to the ground as if asleep.

In the lull, the lights come onto the whareniui. The children are oblivious to the storm because they are playing on their technology. Principal Pat has a hopeful look on her face to indicate that the storm must have passed.

Principal Pat: Thank goodness that's over. Tāwhirimātea must have finally got tired! I'll just pop outside to check.

Koro Ken: I wouldn't do that if I were you, Tāwhirimātea doesn't usually give up so quickly.

Principal Pat: *(Dismissively)* I'm sure I'll be fine. See you soon...

Principal Pat steps out to where the storm dancers are 'sleeping'. She no sooner gets outside when the storm instrumental recommences. Tāwhirimātea makes a signal with his taiaha and one by one the dancers awaken and start to circle Principal Pat. The storm continues to build again, and the

dancers concentrate on creating a tornado type effect around Principal Pat (who is now obscured from view). All the while, Tāwhirimātea is conducting the performance with his taiaha – encouraging the dancers to greater heights of destructive power.

At the crescendo, trees are heard falling and amongst a shower of sparks, thunder and lightning, the lights on stage go out (while the lights are out, the dancers and Tāwhirimātea leave the stage). Panicked screams are heard from the children in the wharenui. Principal Pat (dishevelled and covered in fragments of trees and shrubs) stumbles into the wharenui.

Principal Pat: What is it? Has someone been injured? I heard the terrifying screams.

Children in unison: THE WIFI AND POWER HAVE GONE OUT!!!!

The lights go out for the end of scene 3.

SAMPLE