



The Stars of Matariki - 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). An eclectic array of culture and personalities assemble for the visit (teachers, parents, and children).

The visit starts well, as the children are welcomed onto the marae (**Song 1. Tūrangawaewae**). The kaumatua 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. After the initial panic settles, candles are lit.

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 kaumatua 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 kaumatua 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 firstly remembrance and celebration (**Song 6. Matariki Atua**).

Second half

The kaumatua 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 and replace it with a capitalist system trading tiakarete (chocolate) instead (**Song 7. Tiakarete**). Ironically Haunui is lactose intolerant and eating his beloved tiakarete causes a great deal of flatulence (hence his name Haunui which can be translated as big wind).

His plan is going extremely well, until one of his bogan companions accidentally reveals his traitorous plan. He is cast from the whānau and left devastated that his shadow side has caused him to act so

poorly (***Song 8. Dance of the Shadows – 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, introduces Plan B – to become the 10th star of Matariki. Team Smarty Pants outline the cunning plan to grow Haunui's size (eat a great deal of Tiakarete leading to a massive increase in gas). Unfortunately, Haunui has not fully learned from his previous mistake, and his ambition is re-kindled as he sets off on his new quest (***Song 9. Never Gonna Give It Up***).

Sadly, the gas build-up plan works too well and Haunui grows so large that he explodes as a super nova. 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 (***Song 10. Remembrance song – instrumental***). They mourn his passing (***Song 11. Stardust***).

Rehua (the father of the Matariki 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 Kaumatua to teach humility and peace to those on earth.

The marae visit comes to an end and the cast all join together to sing the finale (***Song 13. Hoki Tū Mai***).