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Rākau

The Ancient Forests of Aotearoa

NED BARRAUD

UP CLOSE TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF OUR NATIVE TREES

This beautifully illustrated and handsomely packaged guide to the evolution, habitats and variety of the rākau (trees) and ngahere (forests) of Aotearoa for young readers is written and illustrated in award-winning Ned Barraud's hallmark accessible, informative and captivating style.

Featuring gatefolds and framed throughout by core mātauranga Māori and the expertise of curators at Te Papa, New Zealand's national museum, *Rākau* takes young readers from pre-history to the present day. It introduces key species and highlights the significance and use of different native trees and the impact of humans on their vitality.

Ideal for both the library and home, this engrossing book helps young readers discover what makes our rākau so special and worthy of our care.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ned Barraud is an author/illustrator of over twenty children's books exploring the natural world. These include *Tohorā: The Southern Right Whale*, *Rock Pools: A Guide for Kiwi Kids*, *New Zealand's Backyard Beasts* and *Mangō: Sharks and Rays of Aotearoa*, the last of which won an award for children's natural history at the 2024 Whitley Awards. Along with author Gillian Candler, he has also illustrated the popular Explore & Discover series, which includes the prize-winning *At the Beach*.

Leon Perrie is Curator Botany at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Leon specialises in plant taxonomy and the collection of plant specimens.

Isaac Te Awa (Kāti Māmoe, Kāi Tahu, Waitaha, Ngā Puhī) is Curator Mātauranga Māori at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Isaac is a weaver and specialises in the revitalisation and reconnection of Māori art practices to community.

SALES POINTS

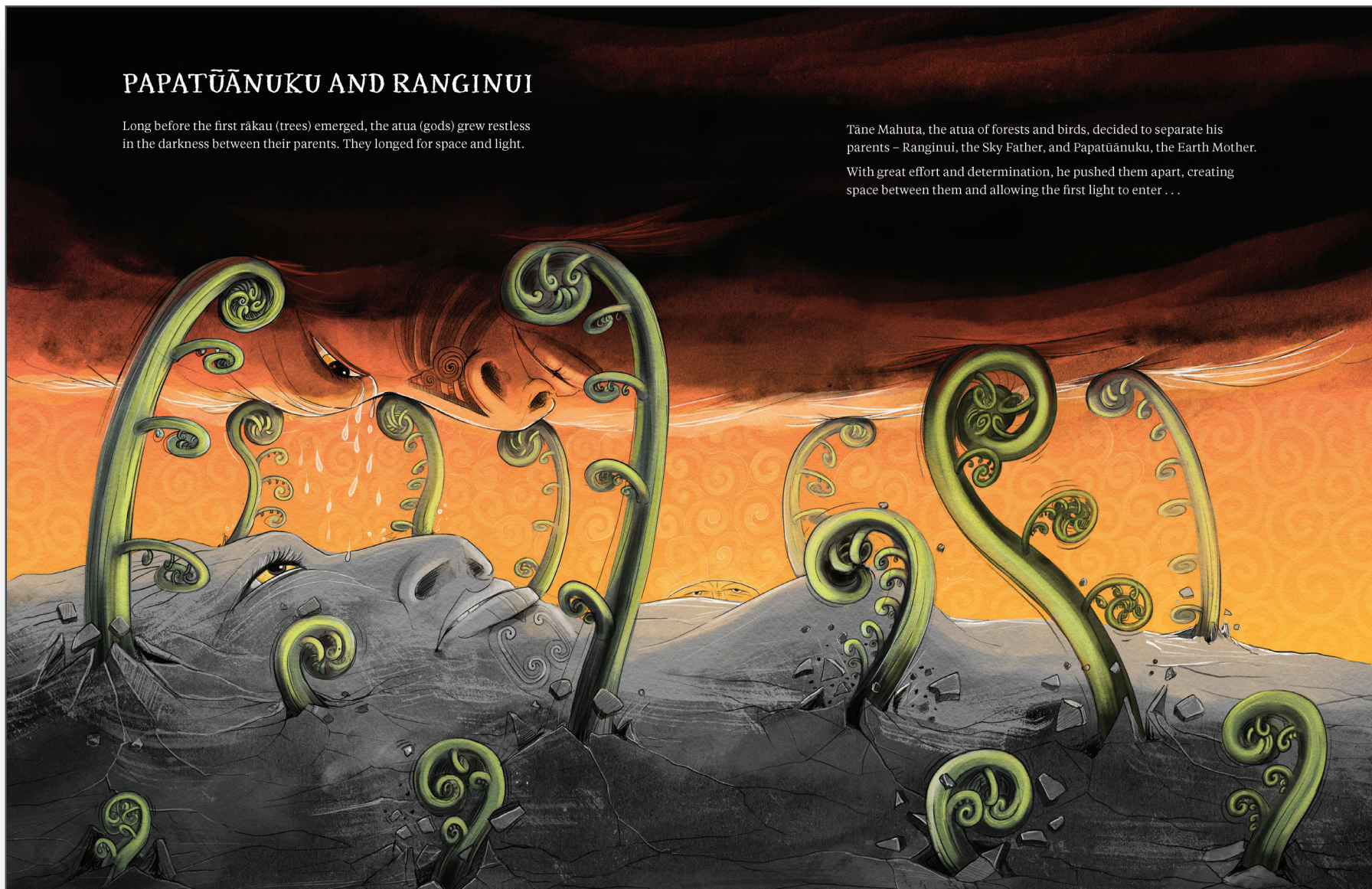
- Another high-quality children's book by New Zealand's unique museum publisher.
- Follows Ned's award-winning *Mangō: Sharks and Rays of Aotearoa*.
- Impactful illustrations and educational, accessible text.
- Backed by the expert knowledge of Te Papa's science and Mātauranga Māori teams.
- Includes pūrākau and takes the reader from pre-history to their own backyard.
- Includes two gatefolds to illustrate the magnificent giants, kāuri and rātā.

PAPATŪĀNUKU AND RANGINUI

Long before the first rākau (trees) emerged, the atua (gods) grew restless in the darkness between their parents. They longed for space and light.

Tāne Mahuta, the atua of forests and birds, decided to separate his parents – Ranginui, the Sky Father, and Papatūānuku, the Earth Mother.

With great effort and determination, he pushed them apart, creating space between them and allowing the first light to enter . . .



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TAWAI NGAHERE – BEECH FOREST

This kea has been feasting on beech seeds, one of its favourite foods. However, kea face serious competition from hungry introduced pests...

Vast forested wilderness areas still exist in the more remote, mountainous regions of Aotearoa. Rugged, rain-soaked beech forests stretch as far as the eye can see. Unlike the lowland podocarp forests, tawai (beech) forests are more difficult to reach, and so have been more protected from logging and development.

Deer, possums, pigs, goats and rats eat large amounts of new leaves, buds, flowers and seeds in the tawai forest. This heavy browsing disrupts the ecosystem and slows the growth of key plants that keep the ngahere healthy.

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BROADLEAF TREES

Many broadleaf trees in other parts of the world are deciduous, dropping their leaves in autumn. But in Aotearoa, most of our broadleaf rākau are evergreen, meaning they keep their leaves throughout the year.

Kāmahi

Beech forests are often mixed with podocarps, like rimu and tōtara, and broadleaf trees. One of the most common rākau found growing alongside tawai is kāmahi. Kāmahi are tough survivors that can cope with harsh, cold conditions. In summer, their long, fluffy flower clusters have a sweet honey scent.



Rewarewa

With their long, jagged leaves and alien-looking flowers, rewarewa stand out in the bush. If you look out over the forest canopy, it's easy to spot a rewarewa from a distance, as its tall tapered shape is clearly seen above the other trees.



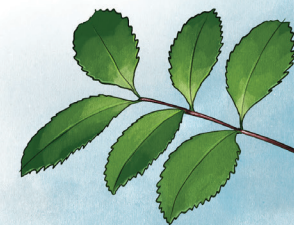
Tawa

Tawa are among the most common broadleaf trees in Te Ika-a-Māui. Here, they once dominated the lowland ngahere. The fruit of a tawa tree looks a bit like a black olive.



Pukatea

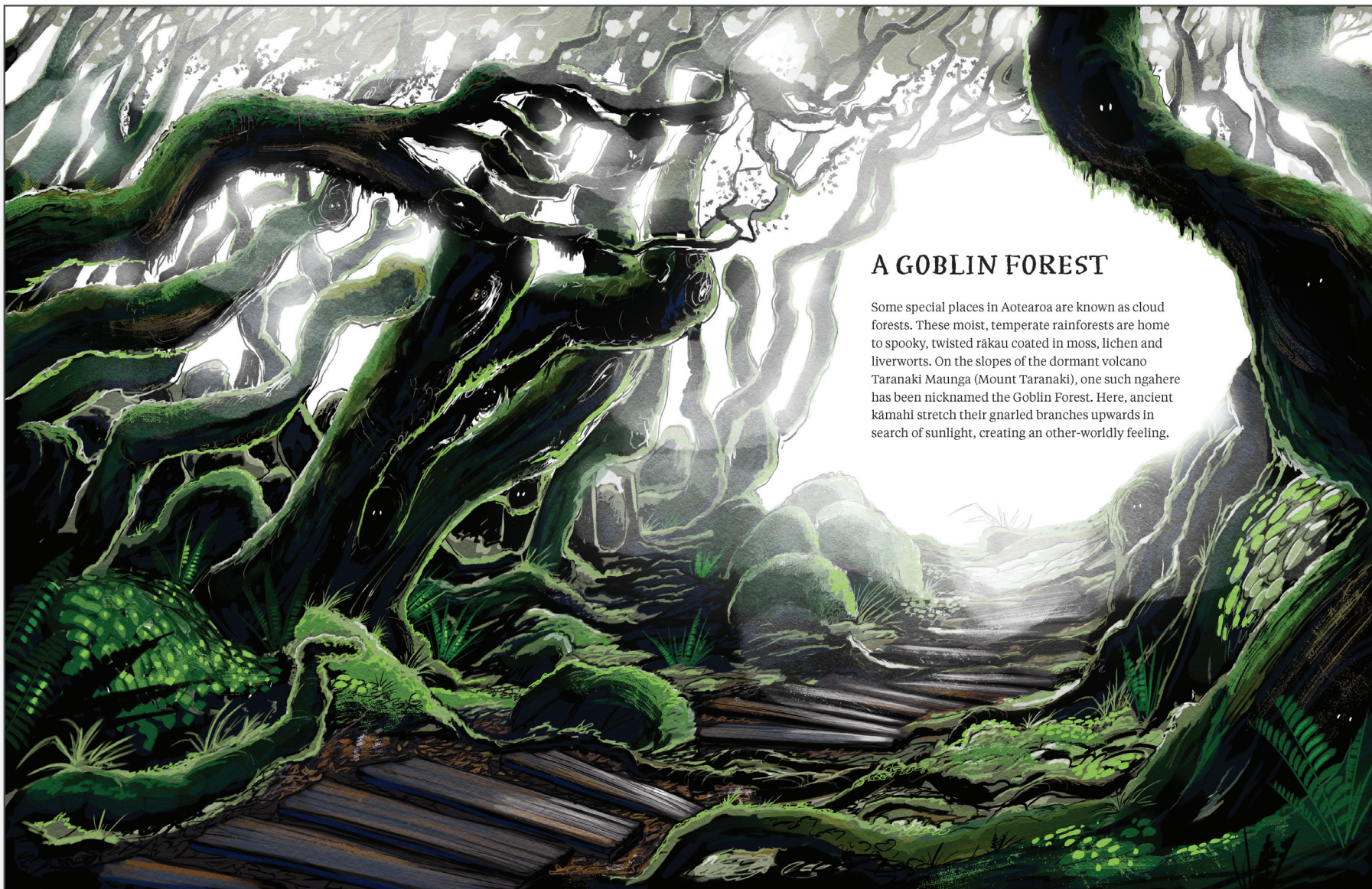
Pukatea love swampy wetlands, and they can rise above the other rākau as a forest giant. In Te Ika-a-Māui and the top of Te Waipounamu, pukatea add a tropical look with their glossy leaves and beautiful buttressed trunks. The wide, spread-out base keeps pukatea stable in the soggy soil they grow in.



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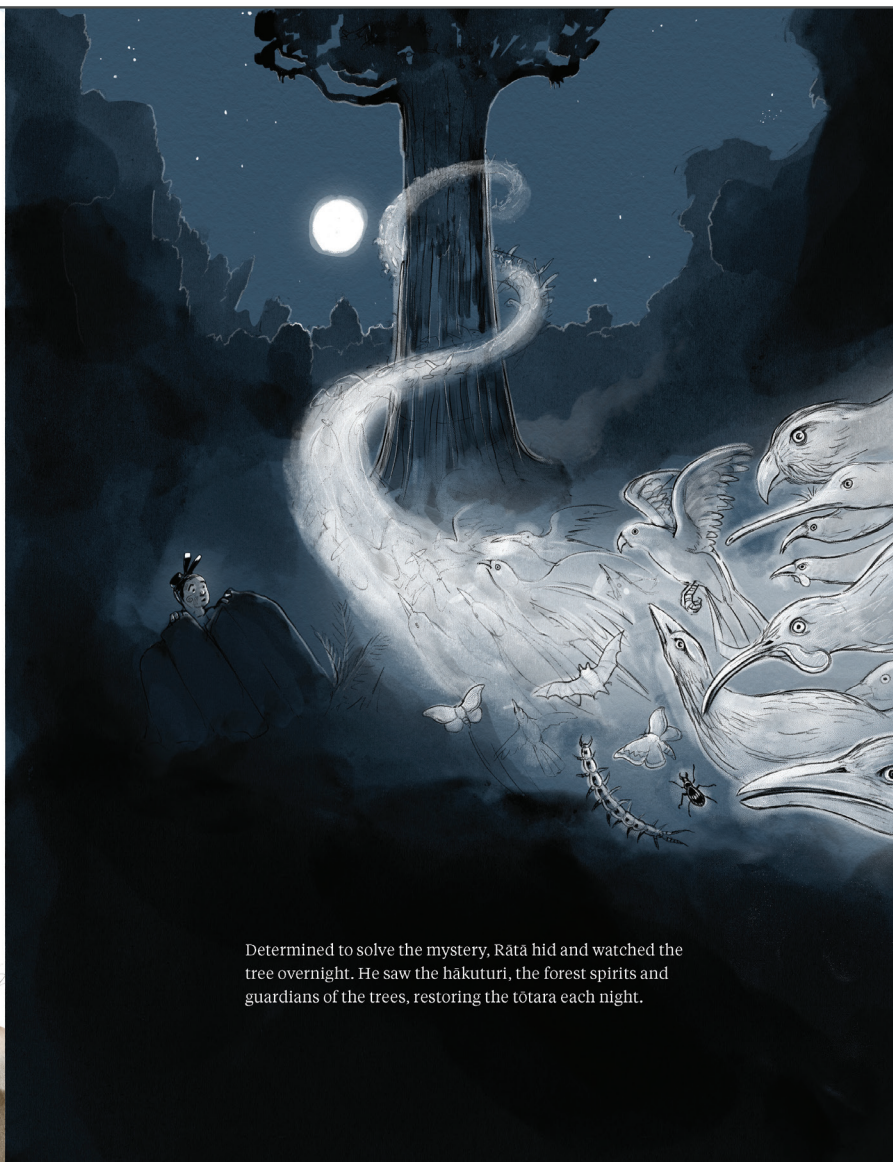
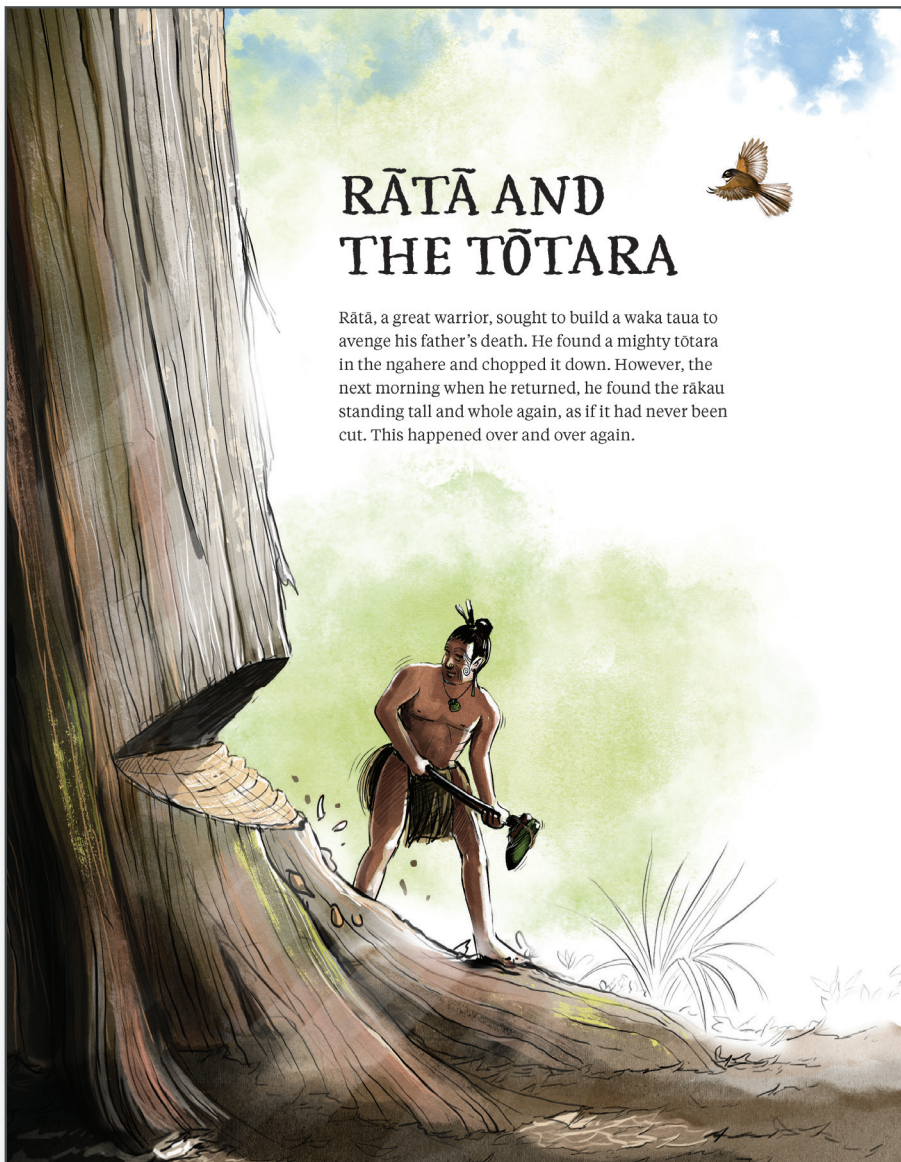


A GOBLIN FOREST

Some special places in Aotearoa are known as cloud forests. These moist, temperate rainforests are home to spooky, twisted rākau coated in moss, lichen and liverworts. On the slopes of the dormant volcano Taranaki Maunga (Mount Taranaki), one such ngahere has been nicknamed the Goblin Forest. Here, ancient kāmahi stretch their gnarled branches upwards in search of sunlight, creating an other-worldly feeling.

RĀTĀ AND THE TŌTARA

Rātā, a great warrior, sought to build a waka taua to avenge his father's death. He found a mighty tōtara in the ngahere and chopped it down. However, the next morning when he returned, he found the rākau standing tall and whole again, as if it had never been cut. This happened over and over again.



Determined to solve the mystery, Rātā hid and watched the tree overnight. He saw the hākuturi, the forest spirits and guardians of the trees, restoring the tōtara each night.

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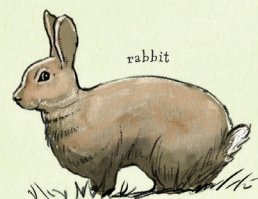
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Did you Spot?



rabbit



kawakawa looper moth



titipounamu rifleman



piwakawaka fantail



German wasp



kawakawa looper caterpillar



miromiro fantail



kahikatea korōi



possum



huia feather



pūriri moth



kahukura red admiral butterfly



werewere-kōkako sky-blue mushrooms



tōki poukatea



kea



pātua

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