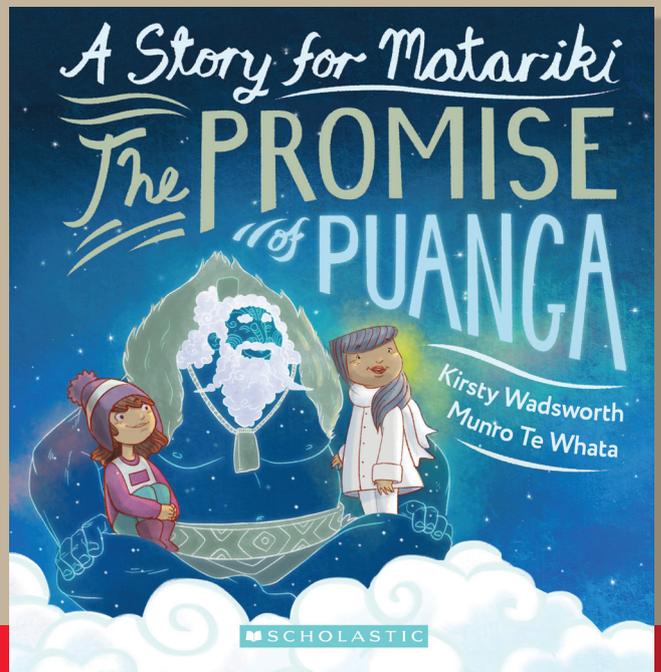


# A Story for Matariki The Promise of Puanga

By Kirsty Wadsworth  
Illustrated by Munro Te Whata



- Reading • Writing •
- Social Studies • Art •

## Synopsis

Hana and her best friend Puanga have adventures together throughout the summer, spring and autumn months. But in the winter, they are stuck in front of the fire, huddling to keep warm. When Hana shares with Puanga that their village is suffering from the bitter winters and never seem prepared for them, Puanga goes quiet. Puanga tells her she is really a star. She used to live with her cousins, the Matariki sisters up in the sky. Puanga explains that they're too low for people to see them from here, because they're surrounded by hills and mountains. She offers to go back up into the sky to be a special sign (a shining star) so that the people of Aotearoa who can't see the Matariki sisters can see her and know that winter is coming soon. Hana hugs her friend goodbye, sad that she is leaving but knowing it will make life easier for her town.

## About the Author

**Kirsty Wadsworth** was born in Slough in the United Kingdom and moved with her parents to New Zealand when she was 18 months old. Kirsty was home-schooled from the age of 10, and later home-schooled her three younger siblings for two and a half years. She lives in Levin with her fiancé, Manu and their German Shepherd. In her spare time, when she's not teaching, reading or writing stories, Kirsty helps Manu write songs for his kapa haka group and acts and helps backstage at the local theatre.

## About the Illustrator

**Munro Te Whata** is an animator, illustrator and writer. For his tertiary education he achieved a diploma in animation and a Bachelor of Creative Arts, majoring in creative writing. With over ten years' experience in the professional arts, when he's not working, he's drawing, writing and drawing some more. Te Whata's origins are Niuean (from the village Tuapa), and Maori (Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Porou). He lives in Auckland with his wife Alishia, and their three children, Quincy, Hazel and Shiloh, and their husky, Nova.



# Writing Style

*The Promise of Puanga* is a new addition to the popular Matariki range, this time introducing readers to the Puanga star, which is celebrated in parts of New Zealand where Matariki cannot be seen. The author uses pared back language, letting the story tell itself. Some Māori words such as *awa*, *whanau*, *Tāwhirimātea*, etc., are included naturally in the story. There is also an edition available in te reo Māori, called *He Pūrākau Matariki, Te Kī Taurangi a Puanga*.

The text is in the third person, past tense. The author uses a range of short and long sentences, and includes dialogue. *The Promise of Puanga* is written for the 3- to 7-year-old age group; an uplifting, topical story about changing weather and the coming of winter. The book presents opportunities to explore cultural diversity and traditions, with themes of friendship, family, Māori tradition and the empowerment of young women. Munro Te Whata's bold illustrations – a mix of watercolour and computer art – bring the story to life. The style appeals to lovers of Disney's *Moana*, and the character of Māui.

## Shared Learning and Discussion Points

### ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- Look at the cover. When and where is this story set? Can you tell? Who or what do you think this story is about? Why do you think that?
- What is *whānau*? And where is the story set? (p.3)
- Who is an adventurous child and who is her best friend? What do they like doing together? (pp.4-5)
- What happens in spring? What are the parents of lambs, calves and foals called? (pp.6-7)
- What is an *awa*? What do the girls like to do at the beach? [pp.8-9]
- Why are the leaves on the ground and not on the trees? (pp.10-11)
- How does winter change their town? (pp.12-13)
- What do you like to do in winter when you're forced to stay inside? (pp.14-15)
- Why is Hana worried? Why do you think the winters are getting worse? (pp.16-17)
- What do you think is the special secret? Is this picture during the day or at night? How can you tell? (pp.18-19)
- Who are the Matariki sisters? How do they show that cold weather is coming? [The stars disappear in April (Autumn), signalling the time to gather and preserve crops. They reappear again in late May/early June. If the stars are clear and bright, Māori believe it is a sign that there will be a productive season ahead and planting should begin in September. If the stars appear hazy and closely bunched together, a cold winter is in store and planting should be put off until October.] (pp.20-21)
- What does the strong wind blow in, and why does he come down? (pp.22-23)
- What gift does Puanga give Hana? How does she warn them? (pp.24-25)
- Why does Hana cry when she hugs her friend? Where will she see Puanga again? (pp.26-27)
- How does Tāwhirimātea help Puanga? How does the illustrator show you Puanga is in the sky? (pp.28-29)
- What does Hana tell the townspeople, and how do you think they will receive the news? (pp.30-31)
- What/when is the Māori New Year? [It's a time for remembering the dead and celebrating new life.] (p.32)

## Activities

### ACTIVITY 1: REASONS FOR SEASONS

Discuss with your students how we measure time (days, months, seasons, years). What are the different seasons in the year? How has the illustrator changed her pictures for each season? What do you like to do in the different seasons?

Why might different cultures measure times/seasons differently? Does anyone know of a different calendar? In traditional times, Māori believed that the Matariki stars meant it was time to do what? Before what would happen? How did it affect their farming practices? Why do Māori celebrate with festivals? Has anyone been to a Matariki Festival?

Matariki/Puanga is also a time to reflect on the past year and to plan for the future. Ask students to create an image that shows a memory from their past year and write below/in the image why it was significant to them. Then draw a star and write a goal for the coming year.



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC

### ACTIVITY 2: CHANGE THIS FOR THIS ...

On pages 20-21, Puanga has a solution to help the villagers. As a class, brainstorm other solutions that may have worked. Students then pick one of those ideas and rewrite the ending of the story with their solution. Then, in pairs, students read aloud their endings to their partner, who gives feedback on what they liked about the story (e.g. I liked the way you use interesting verbs in your sentences), and what they feel needs to improve (e.g. You've repeated the word 'stars' quite a bit in that paragraph – you might want to check the dictionary/thesaurus for another word that means the same). Afterwards, students check their own punctuation, spelling and grammar.

### ACTIVITY 3: MĀORI GODS AND GUARDIANS

Discuss with the class how the illustrator drew Tāwhirimātea. What is his role? How does he look like a guardian? What other Māori gods and guardians do they know of?

Ask the students to research more information about Tāwhirimātea. Students then draw him in the middle of a page, using their own illustration style, and write 'W' questions about what they learnt about the guardian. (Who? What? Where? When? How? Why?) Ask the students to write the answers in thought clouds around the figure.

