

MY NEW ZEALAND STORY

# DAWN RAID

PAULINE (VAELUAGA) SMITH

SCHOLASTIC

AUCKLAND SYDNEY NEW YORK LONDON TORONTO  
MEXICO CITY NEW DELHI HONG KONG



Sofia Christina Savea

57 Bedford Street

Cannons Creek

Porirua East

Wellington

North Island

New Zealand



## **SUNDAY, 20 June 1976**

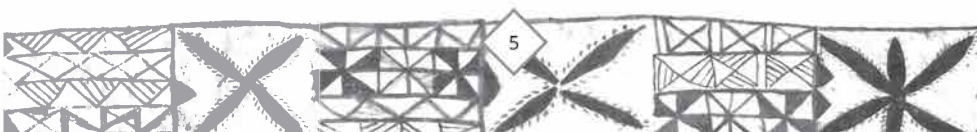
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Dear Diary,

I can't believe the first McDonald's in the WHOLE country is here – in Porirua! – at the shopping centre in Cobham Court.

They had all sorts of problems with the date for the official opening though. Dad said it was because of 'red tape' and had to do with them putting in the wrong benches or something. So it just had its opening ceremony last Saturday, and Mum said when she drove past, there were people lined up out the door and down the footpath! It was the official Grand Opening and was so busy they had to lock the doors and only let more people in when others left.

There was a band playing and Ronald McDonald arrived in a helicopter. The newspaper said when Ronald got out of the helicopter he went to put up an umbrella and the helicopter blades sucked it up out of his hands and smashed it into pieces! I bet Ronald got a fright!

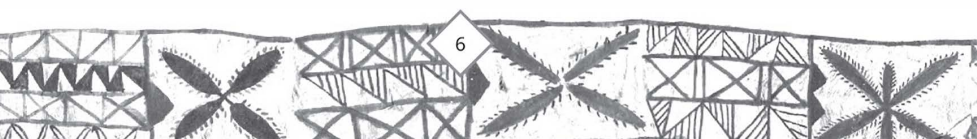


Lenny's already been to McDonald's and said he waited for 40 minutes **just to order!!** But, he said it was **so** worth it. They call the chips 'fries' like they do in America. I love it. ♡♡♡ They're really, really thin and crunchy and Lenny said he would definitely line up for those again. He said the burger was amazing, with pickle or something like that in it, and they have ketchup instead of tomato sauce. I'd line up for 40 minutes for a taste.

Lenny is so lucky he has a milk run so he can buy his own stuff. Far out!!! If I had a milk run I'd spend all of my first pay on Milky Bars and Big Charlie bubblegum. I'd hide them under my bed and eat them at night. I wonder how much Lenny gets paid and how many Milky Bars and Big Charlies it would buy?

Anyway, as a special birthday treat, Dad *was* going to take me there for tea today, but sadly, there'll be no McDonald's for me. Those bratty little brothers of mine ruined it. Stinky little scuz buckets! Mum's still at the hospital with Tavita, Ethan's in his room crying, and their friend Archie got sent home. I think Archie was crying too. Ethan is really scared he'll get a hiding. I hope he does - with Dad's belt!

No, I don't really ... well, I kinda do. But ... man, I'm still so mad at them for ruining my special tea with

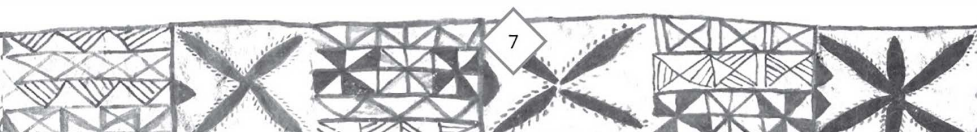


Dad. Oh! I think I can hear the car, Mum's back with Tavita. I'm going to see what happened ...

Back now.

Everything's OK. Tavita has a small bandage on his head, right beside his eye, and a plaster on his knee. Mum said the doctor gave him a telling-off for being so silly. She thought Tavita deserved it, but because he was already upset it probably wasn't necessary. Dad thought Mum should have taken Ethan and Archie to the hospital as well so the doctor could give them a telling-off too. Dad said "One kid – one brain, two kids – half a brain, three kids – NO BRAIN AT ALL". I laughed, Tavita cried, Mum groaned, and Dad told us kids to go to bed.

I agree with Dad about the "no brains" though. Those stupid boys were playing darts, taking turns holding the dart board for each other. It was all fun and games until Tavita was holding the board. Archie tried to be clever and threw all three darts at once. When Mum raced in to see what all the shouting was about, she thought the dart was sticking out of Tavita's EYE (ewww). She got all wobbly on her feet and yelled at Archie to go get his mum. Archie's mum came and pulled the dart out, then Mum rushed Tavita to the hospital. Man, boys are stupid! Why didn't they just climb a tree or something?



Mum said the worst part for Tavita was getting an injection for 'tech mas' or something like that (not sure how to spell it). Anyway, I don't think either of them will get a hiding now. If I don't get to go McDonald's with Dad, I might have to give them both a thick ear!

Mum said she had a present for me, but because of the darts tragedy everyone else forgot about my birthday – except for Dad. He gave me this diary and said it was for me to write down my hopes and dreams. He also said it's the first step towards my university education. I'm not sure how that works. I'm only 13 so it'll be a long time before I need to think about that. Anyway, I don't want to go university, I want to be an air hostess and work for NAC. I want to fly to Egypt and see the pyramids and the tombs. I s'pose NAC flies to Egypt. I wonder if I'll go on a DC-3, or a 737, or a Viscount?

What I really wanted for my birthday was these groovy white go-go boots that come up to your knees. The laces criss-cross all the way up. Even the metal clips that hold the laces are groovy. I feel brassed off about the boots cause I know we can't afford them. I think I'll try to get an after-school job so I can buy them myself. I don't think I'll ever get them because they cost \$12.99! Huh. That's my first hope and dream,

to buy a pair of white go-go boots. I'll look just like Emma Peel off that show on TV - The Avengers.

Maybe Mum is still going to surprise me with the boots. I'll sleep with my fingers crossed all night.

By the way ... did you know that ... I am now OFFICIALLY a teenager!!!!



## **MONDAY, 21 June**

We heard Tavita was a superstar at school today coz everyone wanted to know what happened to him. I saw his teacher when I was walking past the boys' school on my way home and she asked me about it too. When I told her, she just shook her head. I said, "Ah well, you know how it is, one kid - one brain, two kids - half a brain, three kids - no brain at all." She laughed heaps and patted my shoulder and I laughed too. I felt a bit bad stealing Dad's joke, but it was funny and I liked making her laugh.



We all helped out when we got home because we could see that Mum was still a bit upset about what had happened to Tavita. I heard her talking to Archie's mum over the fence. They said things like, "Those kids don't know how lucky they are," and "Things could have ended very badly." Oh shoot, I didn't realise it was that serious. Maybe I won't bother giving the boys a hard time after all.

Yuck I **HATE!!!** boiled cabbage. Tea was great **except** for the cabbage. My mum makes the best meatballs in the world. She puts crushed pineapple, tomato sauce and mixed herbs in them. YUMMMMM. Everyone was home and Dad said if we got stuck in and did the dishes and our jobs we could have a game of cards after tea. He also said we're still going to McDonald's, but we have to wait for the weekend.

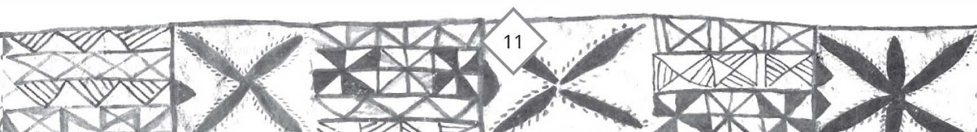
Lenny and Lily said they would do the dishes, and Ethan and Tavita said they would fill the wood bucket and feed the pets. They said I could have a break because my birthday got mucked up yesterday. I got to watch the news with Mum and Dad (b-o-r-r-r-ing). I hate the news. I wish Top Town was still on, I loved that. I heard there's going to be a second series. I wonder how old you have to be to get into the teams? Whangarei won it this year, but I reckon if Porirua put



a team in we would win. We could all eats heaps of McDonald's burgers and we'd be unbeatable!

When all the jobs were done, I got some fab presents. I'd been telling Mum about this thing our teacher brought to school. It was sort of like binoculars with round disks that slot into the top of it and when you look through the two eye pieces, you see the pictures in 3D. I couldn't believe it. They were so amazing, it felt like you were in the picture. If you hold it up to the light it's like the sun is shining and it doesn't matter if you move your head up or down, the pictures still look the same. I loved it so much I asked Mr Morrison if I could look at them at lunchtime. He could see I really liked it so he let me bring it home for the night. He has all these disks showing places all over the world. He even has disks about Egypt. I was so excited about that – until I looked at them and saw some mummified people. That was freaky! I don't think I want to go to Egypt now. I do want to go to Argentina though, it looks beautiful.

Mum saw how much I enjoyed it, so she got me one. It's called a View-Master and it came with a set of seven cartoon disks in a little thing shaped like a film reel. Mum also got me another set of disks about Japan with 3 disks in that pack. Lenny must have gone with her because he bought me a set of



disks too. It's a Disneyland set about Fantasyland. He said there's a set for each land and that I can collect them all – Frontierland, Tomorrowland, Main Street, Adventureland, and New Orleans Square. I wish I had the whole set. I hope I go to Disneyland one day. I bet that would cost heaps though. I think that's a dream. Anyway, Lily brought me some bath cubes and Ethan and Tavita got me 2 Big Charlies.

Goodnight dear Diary. Sleep tight. Don't let the beds bugs bite!

P.S. Best thing is I won Last Card. What a super cool night.

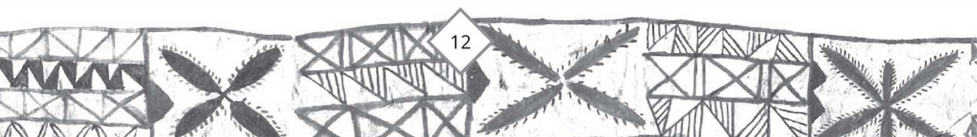
P.P.S. The other best thing (cherry on top) is my View-Master.

## **TUESDAY, 22 June**

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Mr Morrison said we have to do a speech about ourselves. We have to do it in front of the whole class and it has to be at least 2 minutes long. I think I'll be sick that day. I don't want to stand up in front of everyone and talk. Anyway, who wants to hear about my life? I'd rather eat cabbage than do that.

I like school. I love maths and art and story writing. Today in maths we played Buzz and I WON. I heard



Charlotte Craig say, "Sofia always wins." I don't think she meant it in a good way because she had a mean look on her face. Colin Baker said, "You're just jealous, Charlotte harlot."

Charlotte went bright red and glared at me. It's not my fault Colin said that! I think Mr Morrison heard but he never said anything. He probably knows that Charlotte's a bit mean sometimes. We have one week to prepare our speeches. What the heck am I supposed to say about myself?! Hmmm. I'll ask Mum and Dad.

## **WEDNESDAY, 23 June**

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I guess Colin thought he was helping when he said that stuff to Charlotte but all it's done is make her meaner. When I was walking down the corridor she was standing there with her friends as I walked past.

"Can anyone smell that?" she said, really loudly. "I think it's a Samoan stink."

Her stupid idiot friends laughed. I went bright red and wanted to punch her. I carried on walking, trying to act like I didn't care, but I did. Then in class she put her hand up and asked Mr Morrison if he could smell an awful stink. Her idiot friends laughed again. I went

red again. I wish she would leave me alone. I don't want to do my speech in front of her and her stupid friends!

## **SATURDAY, 26 June**

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I finally got to go to McDonald's for lunch with Dad. Man, everything was so shiny and clean! It was bright yellow and red and there were tiles and chrome everywhere. It's the coolest thing I've ever seen. I thought it would be neat to get a job there so I asked the lady behind the counter and she said you have to be 16, dammit.

I had a Big Mac, fries and a fizz. Dad had the same. Yummy-scrummy, no cabbage in these burgers! After lunch, Dad asked what else I wanted to do and I said the Botanical Gardens. I didn't think he'd say yes because it's a long way into Wellington and we usually all go together, but he did! We got an ice cream after the gardens and went home. It was the BEST D ❁

## **SUNDAY, 27 June**

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I started my speech today.

'My Family and Me'



My dad is Siasoi Savea. People call him Sid because they think Siasoi is too hard to say, which is kinda funny because the English equivalent is actually George, not Sid. He was born in Samoa and his parents still live there. Grandma and Grandpa's real names are Lilyana and Tavita. Dad works for Todd Motors, making cars. We tease him about one day bringing a new car home for us.

My mum is Mary-Rose Savea. She's a night cleaner. Her last name was Sparks before she married Dad. She is Pākehā and was born in Napier and her parents still live there. We call them Christama and Stanpa. It started because their names are Christina and Stan but when Ethan was little he couldn't say Grandma Christina and Grandpa Stan. Instead he'd say Christama and Stanpa. It just stuck and we all like it.

Lenny is the oldest kid. He's 17 and named after my uncle Leonard (Mum's brother). He has a milk run. Lenny, that is, not Uncle Leonard.

My older sister Lily is 15. She's named after Grandma and her middle name is Pearl. Dad says it's because pearls are precious.

Ethan is 10 and goes to Cannons Creek School. His best friend is Archie, our next-door neighbour. Sometimes they get into trouble together.

Tavita is 9 and goes to Cannon Creek School too. He's named after Dad's dad. He likes following Dad around and helping him make stuff. Tavita, that is, not Grandpa.

I am Sofia Christina Savea. I was given my middle name after Grandma Christina (Christama). Dad chose my first name. Mum says he chose it because of Sofia Loren (the actress). We have 2 cats, Jaffa and Minty, and a dog, Maile (Samoan for 'dog'). I like art, maths and writing.

I read it to Mum and Dad. They said the family bit was good but I needed to make stuff about me more interesting and make the speech longer as it only took 1 minute and 10 seconds. They said I need to read it a bit slower too. Blow that! I plan to read it as quick as I can and get it over with. I'll try to add some more about me tomorrow.

## **MONDAY, 28 June**

Mr Morrison read us some short profiles about famous people today so we would have some ideas about what we might want to say about ourselves. That's all very well for those people - they're famous for the things they did, so there's plenty to say about them. What have we got to say? We're only 12 or 13!

I really liked the profile about Martin Luther King Junior, though. He was an African American who fought for Civil Rights for him and his people. He wanted the Black people in America to be treated fairly and have the same rights as the white people. It's a really sad story because he was shot and killed for standing up for what he believed. The saddest part is that he had a wife and children. One of his children, Bernice, was born the year before me. Maybe, when I'm an air hostess, I'll fly to America and meet her. That would be cool bananas and she could tell me about her father.

The other profile I liked was about Kate Sheppard. She got women the vote, making New Zealand the first country in the world to do it. I don't know why women couldn't vote before that. That's just unfair. Kate Sheppard was like Martin Luther King Junior, in a way, because she fought for people's rights too.

Walt Disney was an interesting profile too. Mr Morrison said profiles should tell the audience about the person, what they believe, and what they did. Geez, I haven't done anything – and I believe what my parents tell me. This is going to be hard!

I'll have tea and then try to finish my speech.

CABBAGE again! WHY?



When we were doing the dishes, Tavita wanted to know what year he was born (1967). His teacher said they have to find out what was happening in the world the year they were born. It got me thinking about things that have happened in my life, and that helped with my speech. Here's what I've added:

In 1964 I was a baby. I beleived in sleeping, drinking milk and (when I was teething) eating rusks.

In 1966 I was 2. I beleived in following Dad around, saying "me too". (Mum said that was what I did, so sometimes they called me 'me too'.)

In 1968 I was 4. I beleived in being a big sister and playing with my baby brothers.

In 1969 I was 5. I beleived in going to school. (I didn't really believe in this, I had to go. I was really scared about going but at least I had Lily with me.)

In 1972 I was 8. I beleived in Santa Claus (or I pretended to, so I didn't miss out).

In 1974 I was 10. I beleived in going to Intermediate. (Well, I had to go and it was scary because Lily wasn't there.)

In 1975 I was 11. I beleived in sunbathing and going to the swimming pool.



It's 1976 now. I have just turned 13. I believe in going to College (yay, both Lily and Lenny are here), and I think I believe in civil rights. The thing I believe the MOST is that kids shouldn't have to eat cabbage – it should be banned!

Mum and Dad said that was a clever way to talk about my life. They said it was still less than 2 minutes because I read it too fast. Dad reckons I could be a writer. I do love reading books, especially scary ones. Tomorrow we have to do our speeches. My tummy is churning and I think I feel a bit sick about it. Maybe it's the flu? I wonder if I can fool Mum.

## **TUESDAY, 29 June**

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Nope. Mum didn't buy it. She said I don't have a temperature and I'd eaten breakfast just fine. I should've known better than to eat breakfast – DERRRR!

Mr Morrison said we would do our speeches in alphabetical order, which was good and bad. Good because I wasn't first, bad because I had ages to wait and it made me nervous. I didn't even hear the 6 kids who went before me. Colin had to go first. I felt sorry for him, but he didn't even care. I think he likes talking in front of the class.

Charlotte must have been nervous because she read hers REALLY fast. Hers was a bit sad. She lives with her aunt and shares a room with 2 of her cousins. Her brother lives with another aunt, and her sister is with her mum. I don't get it, why wouldn't they all live with her mum?

When I read mine, I decided not to rush like Charlotte. Everyone laughed when I read the bit about the cabbage, even Charlotte and her stupid friends. We had to hand in our written speeches.

## **WEDNESDAY, 30 June**

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We got our speeches back and this is what Mr Morrison wrote on mine:

*Good job, Sofia, this is well written and a creative way to talk about yourself. You have used humour and painted an interesting picture with your words. Your speech was well paced and you paused to get the attention of the audience. Be sure to check your spelling (remember, 'i before e except after c', so it's 'believed'), and the use of commas. You may be a writer in the making.*

I was floating on a cloud when I read that. I fell off the cloud and hit the ground when I read his last comment though ... *Would you like to read this out at assembly?*

NOOOOOOO, I would not like to read it in front of the whole school! NO WAY HOSE HOSAY JOSE (actually, I think this is how it's spelled, like the song 'Do you know the way to San Jose').

Mum and Dad said they were chuffed with what Mr Morrison wrote. Dad said I should read it out at assembly, he said I needed to push myself. The only place I want to push myself is off a cliff! I can't speak in front of the whole school! I actually do feel sick now.

## **THURSDAY, 1 July**

I have to read my speech in assembly tomorrow. I practised tonight in front of everyone. I left out the bit about pretending to believe in Santa, of course, coz I didn't want to ruin it for the boys.

"I don't get in trouble with Archie," Ethan said. Mum gave him a look and pointed to Tavita's eye and that shut him up. Lenny said he liked the bit about Martin Luther King Junior and civil rights. He asked if I knew anything about the Māori land march.

"It started last year in the Far North," he said, "from a place called Kapowairua. They headed south and collected more people from a marae in Te Hapua."

The Māori people were unhappy because land had been taken from them by the government (the Crown, as Lenny called it) and never returned. Lenny told us their slogan is “Not one more acre of Māori Land”.

“That sounds like a civil rights problem,” I said. (I felt quite grown up saying that.) Lenny agreed and laughed. Dad didn’t though. He got a bit annoyed with Lenny.

“It’s nothing like what Martin Luther King died for. Those Māori are just stirring up trouble. They should leave it alone – it happened a long time ago.”

Lenny wasn’t going to leave it alone though. “Martin Luther King died fighting for justice for Black people – a battle they’d been fighting for hundreds of years. The Māori are only asking for things that were taken from them since the Pākehā came and the government started taking land illegally.”

Dad interrupted him. “Well, we need to move on. They need to make the most of what they have now and get on with it.”

“So if someone took our family tapa cloth, would you try to get it back?” Lenny snapped.

Dad looked mad. “Don’t be silly, of course I would.”

“And if the people who took it wouldn’t give it back, would it still be yours?”



Dad was quiet for a moment. I thought Lenny was crazy talking to him like this. Then Dad said, "It's a family treasure. We would do everything we could to get it back."

Lenny smiled. "Yes Dad, that's exactly what the Māori say about their land."

Dad opened his mouth but no words came out.

There was a bit of an awkward moment, and then Mum said, "How about we make some doughnuts for supper?"

I felt sorry for Dad. I've never seen him lost for words. In the kitchen, Lenny told me more about the Māori land march. His friend Rawiri's family are Māori and are quite involved with the people who organised the march. It's called a hīkoi (pronounced 'hee coy'). I wonder if Dad's right ... what if the Māori try to take our house and land back? Wow – I didn't know writing about myself would start all this!

## **FRIDAY, 2 July**

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I can't eat my breakfast. Too scared about reading my speech in front of the whole school. Dad's gone to work and Mum won't be home from her shift for a while. I'm thinking of hiding under the house before she gets