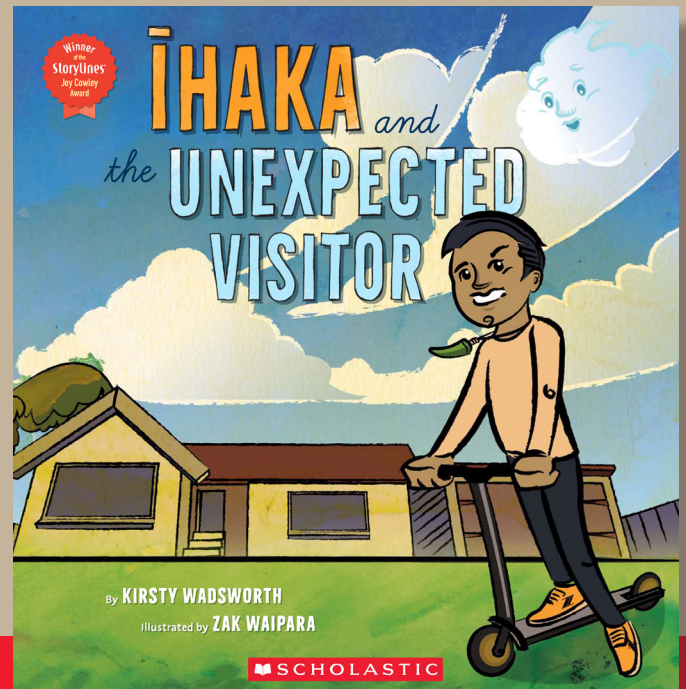


Īhaka and the Unexpected Visitor

By Kirsty Wadsworth and Zak Waipara

- Reading • Writing • Thinking Skills •
- Social Studies • Science



Synopsis

On answering a knock at the door, young Īhaka is surprised to see Tāwhirimātea swirl in. The wind god is looking for a little raincloud that has gone missing. He needs it for an imminent rainstorm and pleads with Īhaka to help him search. So off they go to check in with the gods Tangaroa, Tāne and Rūaumoko, none of whom have seen the little cloud. Dejected, they return to Īhaka's house and find that Īhaka's mum has a pretty good idea where to look.

An edition is available in te reo Māori, *Ko Īhaka me te Manuwhiri i Puta Ohorere mai*.

About the Author

Kirsty Wadsworth was born in Slough, England and moved to New Zealand when she was very young. She loves reading, writing stories, helping at the local theatre and scrapbooking about her various travels. Kirsty's day job is a primary school teacher, which she loves. She currently lives in Levin with her husband, Manu, their young son, Matthew, and the occasional hedgehog. Her first book with Scholastic was *The Promise of Puanga*, which won a Notable Book Award for the Māori translation in 2019.

About the Illustrator

Zak Waipara is a former NZ Herald graphic artist and HOD of Animation at Animation College. Zak Waipara (Rongowhakaata, Ngati Porou, Ngati Ruapani, Ngati Kahungunu) is now Digital Media lecturer at AUT. He has worked as a designer for Māori Television's children's show *Miharo*, illustrated comics and a range of books, and created animated music videos. He is the illustrator of *Horeta and the Waka* and *The Stolen Stars of Matariki* (Scholastic NZ). Born in Milton in the South Island, Zak now lives in Auckland.

Writing and Illustration Style

Written in the third person, *Īhaka and the Unexpected Visitor* is a picture book that celebrates te ao Māori in a contemporary setting. The reader is introduced to Tāwhirimātea, guardian of wind and storms; Tangaroa, guardian of oceans, rivers and their creatures; Tāne, guardian of forests and forest creatures; and Rūaumoko, guardian of earthquakes and volcanoes. The guardians speak in vibrantly descriptive passages and conversational te reo Māori is sprinkled throughout the text. By bringing the guardians to life in a modern setting, the author has made them relatable and relevant.

Despite the fact that Īhaka unexpectedly spends time with powerful gods, he still knows that the person who can help problem-solve absolutely any situation is his mum. The tone of the story is both fanciful and grounded, while the writing is fresh, friendly and playful.

Digital cartoon-style illustrations with swirling watercolour elements add to the playfulness of the story. The solidity of Īhaka and his mum contrast with the loose lines and ethereal nature of the guardians and emphasise the meeting of two worlds.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

Look at the front cover and ask the students:

- What does the word 'unexpected' mean?
- Who do you think Īhaka's unexpected visitor will be?
- Where and when do you think this story is set?

Read the blurb and ask:

- Who is Tāwhirimātea?
- Who do you think the characters on the back cover might be?
- Why do you think Īhaka's help is needed?

Comprehension questions

- What kind of character is Īhaka? (pp.2–3)
- What adjectives (describing words) would you use to describe Īhaka's mum? (pp.4–5)
- Which verbs (action/doing words) reinforce that Tāwhirimātea is the guardian of wind and storms? How has the illustrator conveyed that Tāwhirimātea is a different kind of being than Īhaka? (pp.6–7)
- How do you think Īhaka feels about Tāwhirimātea asking for his help? What do you think 'e hoa' means? (pp.8–9)
- What does the word 'scurried' mean? (p.9)
- Does Īhaka's mum really believe that Tāwhirimātea has asked Īhaka for his help? Why do you think that? (pp.10–11)
- What is the phrase 'rushing river' an example of? (p.12)
- Why has Tangaroa 'only seen the sun dancing through the river and my fish flying among the rocks'? How is this an example of figurative language? (pp.12–13)
- Tāne is the guardian of what? Which four words on page 15 are verbs (action/doing words)?
- What kind of words are 'glistening', 'snow-capped' and 'quaking'? What does the word 'quaking' mean? (p.17)
- Why are Tāwhirimātea and Īhaka 'disappointed'? How would you describe Tāwhirimātea's attitude at this point in the story? How is Īhaka's attitude different? Predict who is 'the smartest person I know' that Īhaka refers to? (p.18)
- How do you think Īhaka's mum felt when she realised that Īhaka had been telling the truth about helping Tāwhirimātea? Which piece of text tells you this? (pp.20–21)
- How can you tell from the text that Tāwhirimātea cares about the little cloud? How could one little cloud help a rainstorm? What is the author's message? (pp.22–23)
- How does Īhaka feel about helping the little cloud and Tāwhirimātea? (pp.24–25)
- Do you think Īhaka's visitors believe his story of the lost cloud and Tāwhirimātea? Why/why not? Does it matter whether or not people believe Īhaka's story? Why/why not?



Activities

ACTIVITY 1: MAKE A STORYBOARD

Draw five to seven illustrations to show the main action of the story. Include speech and thought bubbles. Write a caption to go with each illustration.

ACTIVITY 2: WINDY WORDS

There are many verbs (action/doing words) in this story associated with Tāwhirimātea: *swept, billowing, bellowed, whistled, chilling, scaring, banging, rattling, blew, rumbled, hollered*. Write a poem about Tāwhirimātea and the wind using some of these verbs.

ACTIVITY 3: BE A KAITIAKI

In te ao Māori, the guardians of the natural world, such as Tāwhirimātea, Tangaroa, Tāne and Rūaumoko were the original kaitiaki. Today, we can all play a role in kaitiakitanga to protect our natural environment. How can you practise kaitiakitanga? You could organise or take part in a local beach or stream clean-up, make a poster to raise awareness of a local environmental issue such as kauri dieback or shellfish depletion, or perhaps you could pick up rubbish around your school or kura.

ACTIVITY 4: GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

Research to find out more about Tāwhirimātea, Tangaroa, Tāne and Rūaumoko. Draw a picture of each guardian and write three interesting things about them.

ACTIVITY 5: UP IN THE CLOUDS

Research to learn about the different kinds of kapua or clouds and how they're formed. Use Google Slides to present your findings.

Written by Frances McBeath



teacher toolkit

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