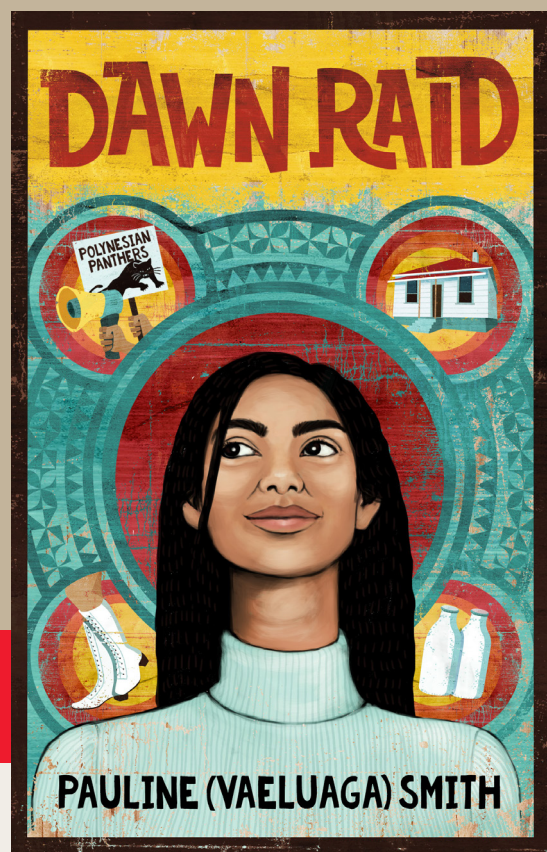


# My New Zealand Story

## Dawn Raid

By Pauline (Vaeluaga) Smith



### Synopsis

Like many 13-year-old girls, Sofia's main worries are how to get some groovy go-go boots, and how not to die of embarrassment giving a speech at school! But when her older brother Lenny starts talking about marches and protests and overstayers, and how Pacific Islanders are being bullied by the police for their passports and papers, a shadow is cast over Sofia's sunny teenage days.

Through her heartfelt diary entries, we see her growing awareness of the bias in the media, the prejudice against Polynesian citizens and the bullying in the playground. We also see her determination to get an after-school job, and save up for things she really wants. Once she learns she can put things on lay-by, she starts paying off the cost for her much-wanted go-go boots.

Along the way, Sofia makes a wider circle of friends including Charlotte, who started out as her enemy. On a holiday to Auckland to meet their grandparents, Sofia is witness to the terror of being dawn-raided and gains an insight into the courageous and tireless work of the Polynesian Panthers first hand, as they encourage immigrant families across New Zealand to stand up for their rights.

The dawn raid experience gives her material for her speech and she delivers it with aplomb, winning second place. In her family's eyes she is a winner!

### About the Book's Creator

Pauline (Vaeluaga) Smith is of Samoan, Scottish and Irish descent and was born in 1963 in the small town of Mataura in the lush green Southland of Aotearoa NZ. She has been a classroom teacher, university lecturer and events manager. The 'magic' or best parts of her life are during weekends and holidays at the family crib (known as a bach to North Islanders) in the gorgeous seaside town of Riverton, where she spends time with her husband Geoff, their daughters, grandchildren and the extended whanau, and where everyone fights over the hammock chair under the tree. *My New Zealand Story: Dawn Raid* is her first book.

# Themes

- Friendships
- Finding your voice
- Standing up for your rights
- Racism
- Bias in the media

## Shared Learning and Discussion Points

- Look at the cover. What can you tell about the story from the picture?
- Why couldn't the main character, Sofia, afford to go to McDonalds or do some of the other things she wanted to do? And how does she solve that problem? (pp.8-9, 60)
- What did Sofia really want for her birthday? What did she receive instead, and how did she feel about it? (pp.9 & 11)
- How is Sofia getting bullied at school? (pp.13-14)
- What did Sofia do with her father and what did she think of it? (p.14)
- Draw a family tree of Sofia's family. (pp.15-16)
- Who did Sofia find inspiring and why? (p.17)
- Draw a timeline of Sofia's life. (p.18)
- What word had Sofia misspelt in her diary? (p.19) What was the spelling rule her teacher told her that would help her to remember how to spell it correctly? (p.20)
- What is the Māori land march and how did Lenny describe it to his father so he would understand it was important to them? (pp.21-23)
- What is a 'dawn raid' and an 'overstayer'? (pp.31-32)
- What is stereotyping? Give an example from the book. (p.32)
- What were the three important foods in Sofia's family? What are three important foods in your family? (p.35)
- How did Sofia's family react when she told them she had been in a fight? (p.37)
- Who led the Hikoi and how did she travel from the top of New Zealand to Wellington? (p.46)
- What was 'Operation Black Pot'? (p.52)
- What do the Polynesian Panthers do in the community? (p.54)
- What was the price of milk in 1975, 1976 and 2018? How much of an increase from 1975? (p.67)
- How much was the minimum wage (per hour) in 1976 and how much is it now? (p.70)
- How did the Polynesian Panthers carry out their protest to politicians? (pp.72-73)
- What did Tigi mean when he said it didn't have as much effect as he'd hoped, because of the bias in the media? (p.73)
- What were Sofia's short- and long-term goals for her money? (p.75)
- What were Mr Carter's tips for writing a good speech? (p.80)
- In what ways are an 'umu' and a 'hangi' the same and different? (p.83)
- What was the kind act Sofia and her siblings did that made their parents cry? (p.98)
- What happened to Lenny, and how did that result in their father getting a better understanding of the protest? (pp.103-104)
- What is the name of the Panthers' lawyer and what did he later become? (p.109, 166) How did he help Lenny avoid getting expelled? (p.110)
- What happened to Charlotte's dad? (p.116)
- What is a 'rite of passage'? What was the rite of passage Lenny had to do for his 18th birthday? (p.128)
- Why were the men taken to jail in the dawn raid? (pp.131-133)
- What were some of the key points in Sofia's speech? (pp.153-158)
- Write down five Samoan words you've learned during the story.



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# Activities

## ACTIVITY 1: FAMILY TREE

Get the students to draw a family tree of their own family members including great-grandparents, right down to themselves. They can put the names in a traditional family tree design or design it themselves.

## ACTIVITY 2: INTERVIEW A CHARACTER

Choose a character from the book and write a list of questions for them. Then have a class member pretend to be the character and use your questions to interview them.

## ACTIVITY 3: DEBATE

Based on Sofia's speech, form teams to debate the topic 'Polynesian Panthers – good guys or gang members?' Have one team for Good Guys and one for Gang Members.

## ACTIVITY 4: SOCIAL JUSTICE

Ask the students if there has ever been a time when they believed strongly in something or had to make a stand. Get them to work in groups and come up with a list of words or phrases that helped them to get their point across. Have them create placards with messages about social justice.

Teaching notes by Maria Gill



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