



Although we came from many lands, we found harmony in each other, for we were sisters and brothers.

‘Some were of the Bird People; others carried the spirit of the Tree People, the Stone People, the Fire People and the Kumara People. There were even the Star People who followed the twinkling markers of the night across the oceans. There were many peoples, and they had many children, and they spread throughout the land to become as numerous as the sands upon the shore.

‘The waka of Waitaha, the great double-hulled vessels that sailed the Long Tides to reach across the widest of oceans, voyaged back to the homeland of Waitangi Ki Roto once in every generation to test the courage of their youth upon the waves. And their return voyage took them to other homelands, to weave a greater design that became the key to the Nation that they made. At each destination, they left some of their crew behind, and maintained the balance in the waka by exchanging them for young people from that place. This was the secret of the Nation, its greatest strength, for they knew that strong children meant a healthy people, and strong children grew best from the mixing of the blood.

‘All who returned on the waka came because they knew Aotearoa found its joy in the arms of Rongo-marae-roa, the Peace Maker. Generation after generation kept the promises of the Ancestors, and lived the dream that lasted for a thousand years and more. It was a long time of peace, a long time to be at one with each other.’



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