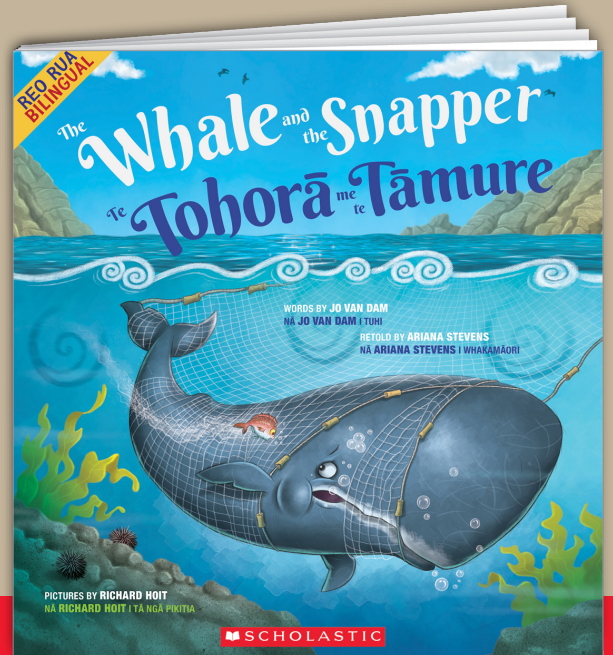


The Whale and the Snapper, Te Tohorā me te Tāmure

Words by Jo van Dam

Illustrated by Richard Hoit

Translated by Ariana Stevens



• Reading • Writing • Te Reo Māori • Science • Art

Synopsis

When a tiny snapper is spared by a hungry whale, she vows to help him one day. Months later, when she discovers the whale trapped in a fishing net, the small fish must decide whether she is brave enough to come to his rescue. Through quick thinking and determination, she proves that even the smallest creatures can make a big difference. Set in the beautiful waters of Whalers Bay, this uplifting story celebrates friendship, gratitude, and the idea that everyone has something valuable to contribute.

About the Author

Jo van Dam was born in England and moved to New Zealand when she was 11 years old. She is the librarian at two primary schools and loves sharing her passion and enthusiasm for words. Jo was brought up on classic fairy tales and fables and has thoroughly enjoyed retelling *The Lion and the Mouse* with a uniquely New Zealand slant.

About the Illustrator

Richard Hoit was also born in the UK but grew up in New Zealand where he now lives by the beach in the sunny Bay of Plenty. Richard has had a passion for drawing and painting since childhood and later went on to study art and art history. Today he illustrates children's books with publishers around the globe.

About the Translator

Ariana Stevens (Ngāti Waewae hapū of Ngāi Tahu). As a teenager, Ariana was taught te reo Māori using the Ataarangi method, later joining the reo revitalisation movement under Kotahi Mano Kāika. She is a graduate of Te Panekiretanga o Te Reo, a licensed translator through Te Toi Reo Māori and has a Masters degree in Māori Language Excellence. Ariana currently oversees a team within Reo Māori Mai, a Māori business specialising in language revitalisation and education strategy..

Writing and Illustration Style

The Whale and the Snapper, Te Tōhorā me te Tāmure is a 32-page paperback picture book for children aged 3+. The story is told in English and te reo Māori in one bilingual edition, which is perfect for young readers of both English and Māori. Having both languages side by side makes te reo Māori more accessible to those readers who are beginning to learn the language. Since the story is written in rhyme, it needs to be retold in te reo in such a way that a sense of rhyme is maintained in both languages. The author Jo van Dam has explored the topics of kindness and courage in this charming adaptation that is based on the traditional Aesop's tale *The Lion and the Mouse*. Written in rhyme, the story has some Kiwi-flavoured words and expressions woven into it, such as 'bro', 'feed', 'Kia ora, e hoa', 'cowshed door', 'Good on ya, mate' and 'No sweat'. Being a librarian and an author, Jo has a love of language. She has woven literary features such as alliteration, superlatives and synonyms throughout the English text. The story is written in the third person past tense. The book's final page wraps up the story by reminding the readers that size doesn't define one's usefulness, which is also the theme of the Aesop's tale *The Lion and the Mouse*. This is a valuable lesson for the readers to remember in their own personal lives.

Richard Hoit's illustrations are bright and lively. The watery scenes and large blue whale are created in different shades of blue with the other main character, the snapper, featured in a contrasting pinky red flecked with blue spots. The snapper is small, but through her striking colours and patterns, your eyes are drawn to the hero of the story. Richard's vibrant illustrations have wonderful composition and visually can stand alone to tell the story's narrative. The characters' facial and body expressions also convey the storyline. No doubt living by the beach in sunny Pāpāmoa provides Richard with lots of inspiration for all the marine wildlife and coastal environments that star on all the pages.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

Read the story aloud and have students read alongside you or follow along as you read. Use some of the questions provided to help guide the students and promote more in-depth discussions. Ask questions that encourage the students to make connections to their everyday lives and make sense of the world around them. Prior to reading, ask the students as they read along to think about how the smallest act of kindness can make a huge difference. Have them focus on how, despite the snapper's small size, she is still not too small to help and also that no matter how big and powerful you are, you can still end up needing help when you get in trouble.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

Look at the front cover and read the blurb on the back cover.

- What has happened to the whale on the front cover?
- Look at the whale's facial expression. What does his expression tell you?
- Look at the small snapper that's near the whale. Do you think an animal that small could help such a large whale? Why or why not?
- What would happen if the whale couldn't free himself from the net?
- Who do you think owns the net? Do you think the person meant to catch the whale? Explain your answer.
- What would you do if you saw a sea creature trapped in a fishing net? How could you help?

COMPREHENSION:

- Point out the rhyming words 'weed/feed' at the end of Lines 2 and 3 on page 3. What do you notice about these words? (p.3)
- The mother snapper warns her kids to stay hidden in the weed from whales and people, who want to catch them to eat. What other animals do you know who hide from predators that want to eat them? How and where do they hide? (p.3)
- Look at the animals on pages 4–5. Which animals could be dangerous to the baby fish? (pp.4–5)
- Has your mother warned you about danger, but you didn't listen to her? What danger did she warn you about? How did you get on? How did you keep safe? (p.4)
- Do you think young animals realise danger is near them? Why or why not? Is that the same with young children? Why is it important to teach children about safety from a young age? (p.4)
- Why is Mum not a fool? (p.6)
- What do snapper have that would make them shimmer and glisten? (p.6)
- How do we know that this giant whale eats fish? (p.6)
- Why are the baby fish swimming in all directions? (pp.6–7)
- The tiny, shiny snapper asks the giant whale to spare him and the other baby fish. What does this tell you about the tiny, shiny fish? (p.9)



- What is the Māori word for ‘tiny’? (p.9)
- Why does the whale think that it’s a joke that the tiny snapper is asking him not to eat the fish? (p.9)
- What would you do if you were the tiny snapper? Would you swim away or ask the whale not to eat you? Explain your answer. (p.9)
- The author says ‘plucked up the guts’. What does this saying mean? (p.9)
- Why does the snapper shiver after the whale swam away? Have you ever shivered in fear? (p.10)
- What does the word ‘briny’ mean? Use the context of the sentence to help you. (p.10)
- Have you learned a lesson first time round like the snapper does, or did it take you a few times to learn the lesson? Explain your answer. (p.10)
- What might be dangerous about the reef or fishing docks? (p.12)
- Why is a fishing net a danger zone? (p.12)
- What does the snapper’s facial expression tell you? (p.12)
- Why is the large whale not so mighty and powerful now? (p.12)
- What might the snapper’s mother say to her now? Do you think she would tell her to swim away? Why or why not? (p.12)
- Why have the words ‘DANGER’ and ‘MŌREAREA’ been put in capital letters? What other type feature gives the feeling of danger with these two words? (pp.12–13)
- What does the word ‘scarper’ mean? What other words could the author have used? (p.14)
- The snapper recognises the whale as the one who helped her months ago. Do you think she will keep her promise about one day helping the whale? Would you keep such a promise? Why or why not? (p.14)
- What do you need in order to be brave? (p.16)
- What does ‘Kia ora, e hoa’ mean? (p.16)
- Look at the words ‘strongest’ and ‘sharpest’. What do you notice about their endings? Explain that these two words are called superlatives. A superlative is a word that describes something that is the very best of its type and can’t be beaten. For instance, a person can be the tallest person or the fastest runner in the class. You use superlatives when comparing three or more things. How would you describe the whale using a superlative? (p.16)
- The word ‘Bravely’ describes the way the snapper approaches the whale. What other words could the author have used instead? (p.16)
- What does the word ‘plight’ mean? How could you find out if you don’t know? (p.16)
- On page 18, the author uses different words to mean ‘eat’, such as ‘bit’, ‘chomped’ and ‘nibbled’. These words are known as synonyms. A synonym is a word or phrase that means the same as another word or phrase. For instance, the words ‘tiny’, ‘small’ and ‘little’ are synonyms. On page 18, the author uses the word ‘massive’ to describe the whale. What synonyms could she have used here? (p.18)
- Look at the words ‘swiftly swam to the surface of the sea’ on Line 2 of page 18. What do you notice about four of these words? Explain that the words that start with the letter ‘s’ are known as alliteration, which is when two or more words start with the same letter sound. Many authors use alliteration for effect and to make their writing memorable. (p.18)
- The snapper made a promise to help the whale and kept her word. Have you made a promise and then kept your word, or did you break your promise? Explain your answer. (p.18)
- What do the words ‘paled at what she saw’ mean? (p.20)
- Why does the author end the text on page 20 with the three dots. Explain that this punctuation is called an ellipsis. What effect was the author wanting to create? Do you think the whale is planning to eat the snapper? Turn the page to check your response. (p.20)
- How has the illustrator shown that the snapper is swimming away fast from the whale? (p.20)
- If your future looks ‘quite grim’, how would you describe it? (p.20)
- The snapper says ‘No sweat’. What other things could she say here that means the same thing? For instance, she could say ‘No problem’, ‘My pleasure’ and ‘No worries’. (p.22)
- The whale says that the snapper was kind to help a brother. What does he mean by that? (p.22)
- The whale and the snapper were happy that they helped each other. Do you think they would help each other in the future if one of them got in trouble again? Why or why not? (p.22)
- In traditional tales, the author often has a moral or a lesson for the readers. What is the lesson in *The Whale and the Snapper*? Look at the coloured words in the text on page 24. How are they are clues? (p.24)
- What would have happened if the snapper didn’t try to help the whale? Why do you think he was the only baby fish to help? The snapper is both kind and courageous. Do you know someone who has both those qualities? How does that person help others? (p.24)

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teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: RENAME THE BAY

The story is set in the sparkling blue waters of Whalers Bay. Imagine that you had to rename the area. Use the scenes in the book to think of another name that would describe the story's setting. For example, you could use the words 'Cove', 'Inlet', 'Gulf', 'Lagoon' or 'Spit' to describe the coastal environment. This part of the activity could be done as a class exercise if extra support is needed. You might name the setting 'Seaweed Spit' or 'Whale Cove'. Design a large sign welcoming people to your newly named area. Design your sign to reflect the new name. For instance, 'Seaweed Spit' might have a lovely border of green seaweed around the edge of the sign and 'Whale Cove' might have a lovely blue watery Māori border similar to the white spiral design that features on pages 4–5. Display your finished signs around the classroom.

ACTIVITY 2: THE WHALE JAIL

The small but mighty snapper eats through the netting jail that the poor large whale is trapped in. As a class, create a giant-sized picture of the snapper freeing the whale from the net. Use pages 16–17 to help you. Get a big piece of paper, such as a piece from a long roll of brown craft paper. Paint the background with pale blue paint. Make the large dark blue whale and the small shiny snapper out of paper, crayons and paint. Glue the paper animals onto the blue background, or you could simply paint the two animals on top of the blue painted background once it's dry. You could add lots of white bubbles near the whale and snapper as well. Then cover the large whale with string in a criss-cross pattern to create the fishing net. Glue or tape the string to the background paper. You could also glue on corks to resemble the fishing net in the story. Cut the string net near the snapper's mouth so that it looks like she has chomped and nibbled her way through the netting jail in order to free the whale. Display the completed artwork in the classroom.

ACTIVITY 3: ENDLESS OPENERS

The story starts with the opener 'Once upon a time'. This traditional opener suits this story as it's based on an old Aesop's tale. There are many different story openers that authors use to capture readers' attention and get them hooked into a story, such as 'A long time ago', 'In a faraway land', 'On a fine, sunny day' and so on. The possibilities for story openers are endless. Together as a class, brainstorm some possible story openers for *The Whale and the Snapper*. Write them down on a sheet of chart paper to refer back to during story-writing time.

ACTIVITY 4: WHALE WATCHING

Imagine that you're a tour guide at Whalers Bay, which is located on the Kaikōura Peninsula in New Zealand. Kaikōura is famous for whales and whale-watching tours. Tour guides share information with visitors about the sights and wildlife in their local area. Pretend you have to tell some whale watchers all about one kind of whale, such as humpback whales, sperm whales, minke whales, blue whales and so on. For instance, you may choose the blue whale. Find out about this whale and decide what you would tell the visitors. You could tell them that blue whales are seasonal visitors to Kaikōura. Remember to tell them interesting facts, such as that the heart of a blue whale is the size of a small car or that the blue whale is the loudest animal that has lived on Earth! Working in pairs may help support lessable learners. Extra help may be needed with the online whale research. As a pair, practise your tour-guide speech. You could start off by telling the visitors your names and welcoming them to Whalers Bay and Kaikōura. Then talk about your featured whale. Keep your voices lively and upbeat. Present your speech to the rest of the class.

ACTIVITY 5: MATCHING WORD GAME

Throughout the book, the author features some important English and Māori words and phrases, which have been highlighted and made to stand out in different colours and a different typeface and size. On pages 6–7, the English and Māori words 'giant whale' and 'tohorā nui' are both highlighted. The word 'tohorā' means 'whale' and the word 'nui' means 'large' or 'great'. Get into pairs to play a matching game. First skim-read the story and write all the highlighted English words and phrases onto small cards. Then write all the matching highlighted Māori words and phrases onto separate small cards. One of the pair can hold up one English card and say the word/s or phrases. Then the other person can hold up the card that has the matching Māori word/s or phrases. Note that the word 'danger' has two different translations in te reo. Why might that be? At the end of the game, swap so that one person calls out the Māori words and phrases and then the other person finds the matching English words and phrases. At the end of each game, use the book to check if your answers are correct.

ACTIVITY 6: DIFFERENT TALE, SAME THEME

The Whale and the Snapper is a Kiwi version of Aesop's tale of *The Lion and the Mouse*. Go to the library or find a copy of that Aesop's tale online and read it together as a class. Talk about the similarities and differences between the two stories. As a class, present the similarities and differences as a Venn diagram or in a columned chart.

Written by Janine Scott



teacher toolkit

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