

Matariki

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Characters

Will **Koro (Grandad)**
Aunt Amiria **Katarina**
Tipene

Aunt Amiria: Wake up, Katarina. You too, Will.
It's time to get up.

Katarina: What do you mean? It's still dark.

Will: Go away!

Tipene: Hurry up, you two. You have to get up.

Katarina: What for?

Will: Don't tell me you get up this early
every morning!

Tipene: No, only on special occasions.

Will: What's so special about this one?

Tipene: We'll show you, but you have to get up.

Aunt Amiria: Get dressed quickly, and come outside
into the garden.

Will: Outside, in the middle of the night?
You must be joking.



Tipene: It's not the middle of the night. It's only
about an hour before dawn. That's why
you have to hurry or you'll miss it.

Katarina: Miss what?

Will: It must be freezing out there.

Aunt Amiria: Yes, it's cold, so put on your warm, fleecy
jacket.



Katarina: What about Mum? Are you waking her up, too?

Aunt Amiria: No, your mum was up all night with the baby. And she looked exhausted when you all got off the bus last night. We'll let her have a rest.

Will: What about letting me have a rest?

Tipene: And **Koro**?

Aunt Amiria: No, we won't wake him up either. He's old and he needs his sleep.

Koro: Who's old and needs his sleep?

Will: Morena, Koro. I need my sleep even though I'm young.

Katarina: Shush, Will. It might be something really good.

Koro: If it's what I think it is, it's really good and it's a great morning for it!

Tipene: Man, it's *really* cold.

Will: I can't believe we're doing this. Anyway, there's nothing to see but stars.

Katarina: The stars are beautiful, though.

Will: But we can see them just as well at home.

Katarina: No, we can't. We never see them as clear as this at home. There are too many lights.



Will: That's right. We've got street lights.
We don't need stars.

Katarina: What are you going to show us?

Will: Hopefully, we can see it quickly and
then we can go back to bed.

Aunt Amiria: All right, look over there.

Katarina: Where?

Tipene: I see them! Over there, just above
the horizon.

Koro: Can you see that group of twinkling
stars?

Will: No.

Tipene: That's because you've got your
eyes shut.

Will: I know. I'm trying not to wake up.

Katarina: What's so special about them?

Koro: Those stars are very special. That's
Matariki! I never get tired of seeing
Matariki rising. And this is a good
place to celebrate it, out here, among
the apple trees, with my vegie garden
just over there. You don't get vegetables
as fresh as these in the town!

Katarina: Why is the garden a good place to
celebrate Matariki, Koro?

Koro: Matariki always appears in the dawn
sky around now. When I was young, all
the crops had been harvested at this
time of the year and there was plenty of
food, so our people had time for singing,
feasting, and speech making.

Katarina: Look at that little **sliver** of a moon.

Tipene: Doesn't the first new moon after the rising of Matariki mark the start of our New Year?

Aunt Amiria: That's right, Tipene. And, as well as celebrating, this is a time to look back and remember all those who have died since last Matariki.

Tipene: Like Nana.

Katarina: Poor Koro. You must miss her a lot.

Koro: I miss her every day.

Aunt Amiria: Me, too.

Tipene: And me.

Koro: But I feel close to her, out here. It's good to bring the family together at Matariki, to learn about the stars and what they mean. We're lucky that you came to visit us at this time.

Aunt Amiria: Our **ancestors** used to say that the stars of Matariki hold the souls of those who have died.

Will: I can see six stars.



Aunt Amiria: Those are just the ones that are clearest, but you can see more with a telescope. The ancient Greeks used to call them the **Pleiades**, or the Seven Sisters. One of them is a little hard to see.

Will: Seven sisters! Two are bad enough!

Koro: Some people say that they are a mother and her daughters.

Katarina: Look, there's Mum at the window with the baby! Quick, point, so she can see Matariki.

Tipene: Yeah, she's looking. She's holding Marama up, so she can see too.

Katarina: Maybe we can have our own Matariki celebration at home next year. There must be somewhere we could go where there aren't so many lights. We could climb a hill or go down to the beach. Wouldn't that be fun, Will?

Will: I guess it might be. So what do we do now?

Aunt Amiria: Let's go inside and light the fire so we can all warm up.

Koro: And then we'll have a feast. How about some of your famous kumara fritters, Amiria?

Aunt Amiria: I haven't got any kumara ready.

Tipene: But we can have pancakes!

Will: Now, *that* sounds like a good idea.

Tipene: And I want to make a kite.

Katarina: Is that a part of the Matariki celebrations as well?

Koro: Yes, Katarina. We make kites because they flutter up high, close to the stars.

Will: Can we help you, Tipene? We can all fly kites and remember Nana.



Katarina: Balloons would be fun, too. Next year we should try and get some **helium** balloons for Matariki.

Will: Look at the stars sparkling. They're so bright and clear.

Katarina: Koro, they remind me of Nana's eyes.



Glossary

ancestors – family members born long ago

helium – a kind of gas that is lighter than air – balloons filled with helium float upwards when released

Koro – the Māori word for “Grandad”

Matariki – the Māori name for Pleiades

Pleiades – a group of stars, a constellation

sliver – a long, thin piece of something