

LOVE AND ACOUSTICS

By Rex McGregor

Synopsis

A Māori legend tells how Tūtānekai played his flute on Mokoia Island, serenading Hinemoa on the shore of Lake Rotorua. Today, two lovers plan to recreate the experience.

Characters

WIREMU, young Māori man

HELEN, young Māori woman, a dancer

Setting

Shore of Lake Rotorua, New Zealand

Time

The present

The sound of waves breaking on a shore.

WIREMU enters, strumming a guitar. He wears a backpack.

WIREMU: (*sings*)

PŌKAREKARE ANA
NGĀ WAI O ROTORUA
WHITI ATU KOE HINE
MARINO ANA E

E HINE E
HOKI MAIRA
KA MATE AHAU
I TE AROHA E

THE WIND ABOVE THE WATER
MAKES WAVES ON ROTORUA
BUT WHEN YOU RETURN TO ME
ROTORUA WILL BE CALM

MY DARLING GIRL
COME BACK TO ME
I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOU
YOU'RE MY ONLY LOVE

I PLAY UPON MY FLUTE
I SEND A LONESOME LOVE CALL
HEAR IT FLOW ACROSS THE LAKE
FEEL IT FLOW INTO YOUR HEART

E HINE E
HOKI MAIRA
KA MATE AHAU
I TE AROHA E

Pōkarekare Ana

The Wind Above the Water

Music and Māori lyrics: Traditional (Public Domain)

F **§** **B \flat**

Pō - ka - re - ka - re a - na.
wa - ter
flute. _____ Ngā wai o Ro - to - ru - a.
makes waves on Ro - to - ru - a.
I send a lone - some love call.

C **F**

Whi - ti a - tu ko - e hi - ne, Ma - ri - no a - na e.
But when you re - turn to me, _____ Ro - to ru - a will be calm.
Hear it flow a - cross the lake, _____ Feel it flow in - to your heart.

B \flat **F**

E hi - ne e. ho - ki mai ra.
My dar - ling girl, come back to me.
E hi - ne e, ho - ki mai ra.

C **F** **Fine**

Ka ma - te a - hau. I _____ te a - ro - ha e.
I can't live with - out you. _____ You're my on - ly love.
Ka ma - te a - hau. I _____ te a - ro - ha e.

1. 2. **D.S. al Fine**

The wind a - bove the I play up - on my

HELEN enters, carrying a phone.

HELEN: Still can't reach him.

WIREMU: Ka mau te wehi. [Too bad.]

HELEN: There's supposed to be coverage over on the island.

WIREMU: Maybe the tour guide made him switch off his phone.

HELEN: Why?

WIREMU: Mokoia's a bird sanctuary. Don't want the tui mimicking ringtones.

HELEN: I hope Anthony's allowed to play his flute.

HELEN checks her watch.

WIREMU: Better be. He's a man on a mission.

HELEN: We should know in less than two minutes.

WIREMU: Come again?

HELEN: He suspected we'd lose phone contact. So we synchronised our watches.
He'll start serenading me exactly on the quarter hour.

WIREMU: Helen. You can't honestly think you're gonna hear anything.

HELEN: Depends on the wind.

WIREMU: Look how distant the island is. Miles away!

HELEN: Sound travels far over a lake.

WIREMU: Starting with enough volume.

HELEN: Anthony can play loud. He's been practising for weeks.

WIREMU: Kia ahatia. [Whatever.]

HELEN: He isn't just dancing Tūtānekai. He lives and breathes the role.

WIREMU: What about you? Do you plunge yourself into yours?

HELEN: I'm here on the shore. Ready for my lover's signal. Wait time less than one minute.

WIREMU: If you get your cue, will you dive in and swim across to him?

HELEN: I mightn't be able to resist.

WIREMU: The water's ice cold.

HELEN: That didn't stop Hinemoa.

WIREMU: Maybe she had a hot day.

HELEN: The legend doesn't specify the season.

WIREMU: It doesn't specify the lake level either.

HELEN: What?

WIREMU: It could've been lower then. The island could've been much closer.

HELEN: So she wouldn't have had to swim so far? Are you trying to minimise her achievement?

WIREMU: The sound wouldn't have had to travel so far. I'm trying to minimise your disappointment.

HELEN: Shh! Coming up in... 5-4-3-2. Listen.

Pause.

WIREMU: Told you.

HELEN: Wait! Sound takes a few seconds to arrive.

Pause.

WIREMU: Epic fail. So much for the experiment.

HELEN: It wasn't an experiment, Wiremu. It was an experience.

WIREMU: If that makes you feel better.

HELEN: Anthony stood on Mokoia Island and serenaded me with his flute. I stood on the shore of Rotorua and listened for his call.

WIREMU: And the fact that you didn't hear it...

HELEN: Isn't important. We shared the moment. Atmospheric conditions just didn't favour us today.

WIREMU: You'd get the same result with optimal wind strength and pinpoint direction.

HELEN: You're so cynical, Wiremu.

WIREMU: No, I'm not. I'm science-based.

HELEN: Call Anthony and me romantic. We choose to believe the legend.

WIREMU: I never said it wasn't true.

HELEN: You said it's impossible.

WIREMU: With the flute Anthony's got. A tiny kōauau.

HELEN: I'm afraid Tūtānekai didn't have access to an electronic instrument and amplification.

WIREMU: No. But he probably had a pūtōrino.

HELEN: A what?

WIREMU: A pūtōrino. A trumpet flute.

HELEN: Which is it? A trumpet or a flute?

WIREMU: Both. It's versatile.

HELEN: Really?

WIREMU: They're pretty hard to come by. Would you like a demo? I just happen to have one in my bag.

HELEN: A recording?

WIREMU: No. An actual pūtōrino.

HELEN: They're "hard to come by" and you "just happen to have one"?

WIREMU: When you told me what Anthony was planning, I hunted online.

HELEN: Let's hear it then.

WIREMU unzips his backpack and takes out a pūtōrino.

WIREMU: It's got a high voice. Blow across the top like a flute.

WIREMU plays the pūtōrino high voice.

And a low voice. Played like a trumpet.

WIREMU plays the pūtōrino low voice.

HELEN: That sounds like a totally different instrument.

WIREMU: "But wait. There's more." Blow in the hole in the middle and you get voice number three.

WIREMU plays the pūtōrino bass voice.

HELEN: Wow! So resonant.

WIREMU: It's all about that bass.

HELEN: That sound could...

WIREMU: Waft for miles.

HELEN: And you had this in your car the whole time? All the while when you were driving us here?

WIREMU: Āe. [Yeah.]

HELEN: Why didn't you tell Anthony?

WIREMU: He kept going on about his kōauau.

HELEN: But he'd love this!

WIREMU: What was I gonna say? "Mine's bigger than yours."

HELEN: Not funny, Wiremu. You should have loaned it to him before he headed off to the island.

WIREMU: Wouldn't do him any good. It takes time to learn to play this. I was up all night.

HELEN: You could have shown him how.

WIREMU: You think he'd have accepted my help?

HELEN: Fair point.

WIREMU: He barely accepted my offer of the drive.

HELEN: Sorry about that.

WIREMU: And only one way. He wasn't very subtle. Booking tickets for you both to fly back.

HELEN: We do need to get home fast. For rehearsal.

WIREMU: I thought that was just his excuse.

HELEN: Our boss is a slave driver. He only let us out temporarily. We need to be back at the grindstone tonight.

WIREMU: I bet Anthony doesn't call it that.

HELEN: He has choicer words.

WIREMU: I thought you two would love dancing together.

HELEN: If only we could.

WIREMU: What do you mean?

HELEN: Our boss has this concept. “Physical separation of the lovers.”

WIREMU: I imagined lots of long love duets.

HELEN: We wish.

WIREMU: So what is there instead?

HELEN: Plenty of solos for me. Not much for poor Anthony, though. He’s hardly ever on stage. And when he is, he’s only playing the flute.

WIREMU: Don’t give too much away.

HELEN: Are you still coming to opening night?

WIREMU: Am I still welcome?

HELEN: Course. Anyway, I’m shooting off to the wharf now. I’ll say goodbye.

WIREMU: It was great to catch up, Helen.

HELEN: Same.

WIREMU: Would you like a lift to the airport?

HELEN: No, thanks. Anthony’s booked a taxi. Ka kite. [See you.]

HELEN starts to leave.

WIREMU: Hey! I’ll play while you walk away. You can tell Anthony you definitely heard the distant sound of a flute.

HELEN: We don’t tell each other lies.

WIREMU: Not even a tiny white one? To make him feel good?

Pause, as HELEN ponders.

HELEN: Play, if you like.

HELEN exits.

WIREMU plays the pūtōrino high voice for a while.

WIREMU puts the pūtōrino away and starts strumming his guitar, improvising a song.

