



The Whale Rider

By Witi Ihimaera

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Eight-year-old Kahu, a member of the Maori tribe of Whangara, New Zealand, fights to prove her love, her leadership, and her destiny. Her people claim descent from Kahutia Te Rangi, the legendary "whale rider." In every generation since Kahutia, a male heir has inherited the title of chief. But now there is no male heir, and the aging chief is desperate to find a successor. Kahu is his only great-grandchild--and Maori tradition has no use for a girl. But when hundreds of whales beach themselves and threaten the future of the Maori tribe, it is Kahu who saves the tribe when she reveals that she has the whale rider's ancient gift of communicating with whales.

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Feature film in theaters in June 2003!

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The Whale Rider By Witi Ihimaera Bibliography

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- Brand: Harcourt
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- Original language: English
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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8—Witi Ihimaera blends New Zealand's Maori legends with a modern girl's struggle to have her special gifts recognized in this novel (Harcourt, 2003). Though Kahu is the first child born in her generation and she is well loved by her extended family, she seeks the approval of Koro, the stern man who is not only her great grandfather but also her clan's chief. Family lore is filled with stories of Koro's ancestor who rode a giant whale to bring his people to New Zealand. Their village continues to have a special relationship with the sea and its creatures. When a pod of whales is stranded on a nearby beach, everyone in the community works to save them. Many animals are lost and only one desperately weak whale is turned toward the sea when Kahu climbs onto his back. Both the whale and the girl feel their ancient connection, and when Kahu rides off, her great grandfather finally sees that she is the next leader for her clan. Though the eight-year-old girl is feared lost, her whale companion has left her where she can be found and reunited with her family. Narrator Jay Laga'aia handles the book's poetic rhythm and its Maori words and phrases with an easy tempo and honest emotion. Occasionally the sound quality seems too quiet, but it reflects the novel's introspective sections. Though the Maori language may be a challenge for some listeners, the universal theme of a child looking for acceptance makes this a good additional purchase for middle school and public libraries. It's worth noting that *Whale Rider* was made into an award-winning film a few years ago.—Barbara Wysocki, Cora J. Belden Library, Rocky Hill, CT

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 7-12. Kahu is a girl, born into a contemporary Maori family that traces its lineage to the magnificent Whale Rider, a fabled ancestor who traveled the seas astride an ancient whale. From an early age, Kahu possesses a chief's mystical aptitude, but her grandfather believes that chiefs must be male, and Kahu's talents are overlooked. Rawiri, Kahu's young adult uncle, narrates this novel, which is part creation myth, part girl-power adventure, and part religious meditation. Chapters alternate between Rawiri's telling of Kahu's story and scenes of the ancient whale. The two stories come together in powerful events that, as Rawiri says, have "all the cataclysmic power and grandeur of a Second Coming." With such esoteric material and many wandering plot threads, the story may prove difficult for some readers. But Ihimaera, best known for his adult books, combines breathtaking, poetic imagery, hilarious family dialogue, and scenes that beautifully juxtapose contemporary and ancient culture. A haunting story that is sure to receive additional interest from this summer's film adaptation. Gillian Engberg

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Review

Whale Rider, the movie--winner of the Sundance Film Festival World Cinema Audience Award, the Toronto International Film Festival People's Choice Award, and the Rotterdam International Film Festival Canal Plus Audience Award

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Clifford Ranger:

The book *The Whale Rider* can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. Exactly

why must we leave a good thing like a book The Whale Rider? A number of you have a different opinion about book. But one aim in which book can give many information for us. It is absolutely suitable. Right now, try to closer together with your book. Knowledge or data that you take for that, you can give for each other; you may share all of these. Book The Whale Rider has simple shape however, you know: it has great and large function for you. You can look the enormous world by wide open and read a guide. So it is very wonderful.

Connie Pauls:

The book untitled The Whale Rider is the guide that recommended to you to read. You can see the quality of the publication content that will be shown to a person. The language that author use to explained their way of doing something is easily to understand. The article author was did a lot of analysis when write the book, and so the information that they share to you is absolutely accurate. You also will get the e-book of The Whale Rider from the publisher to make you considerably more enjoy free time.

Blake Westerman:

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Sharonda Adair:

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