

Double Surprise

by Rihia Kenny



Illustrations by Ali Teo

Published 2001 by the National Smokefree Group, comprising The Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of New Zealand (Inc.), the Cancer Society of New Zealand (Wellington Division), the Health Sponsorship Council, the Heart Foundation, and Te Hotu Manawa Māori.

Editorial, design, and production services by
Learning Media Limited, Box 3293, Wellington, New Zealand.
www.learningmedia.co.nz

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c/- Health Sponsorship Council, PO Box 2142, Wellington, New Zealand.

ISBN 0 478 12943 2

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Whenever Mum went outside and sat in her patio chair, the whānau knew she was going out to smoke a cigarette.

Kara sometimes watched Mum smoke. Kara would watch the puffs of smoke coming out of Mum's mouth. She would watch the smoke curl up over Mum's head and disappear into the wind.





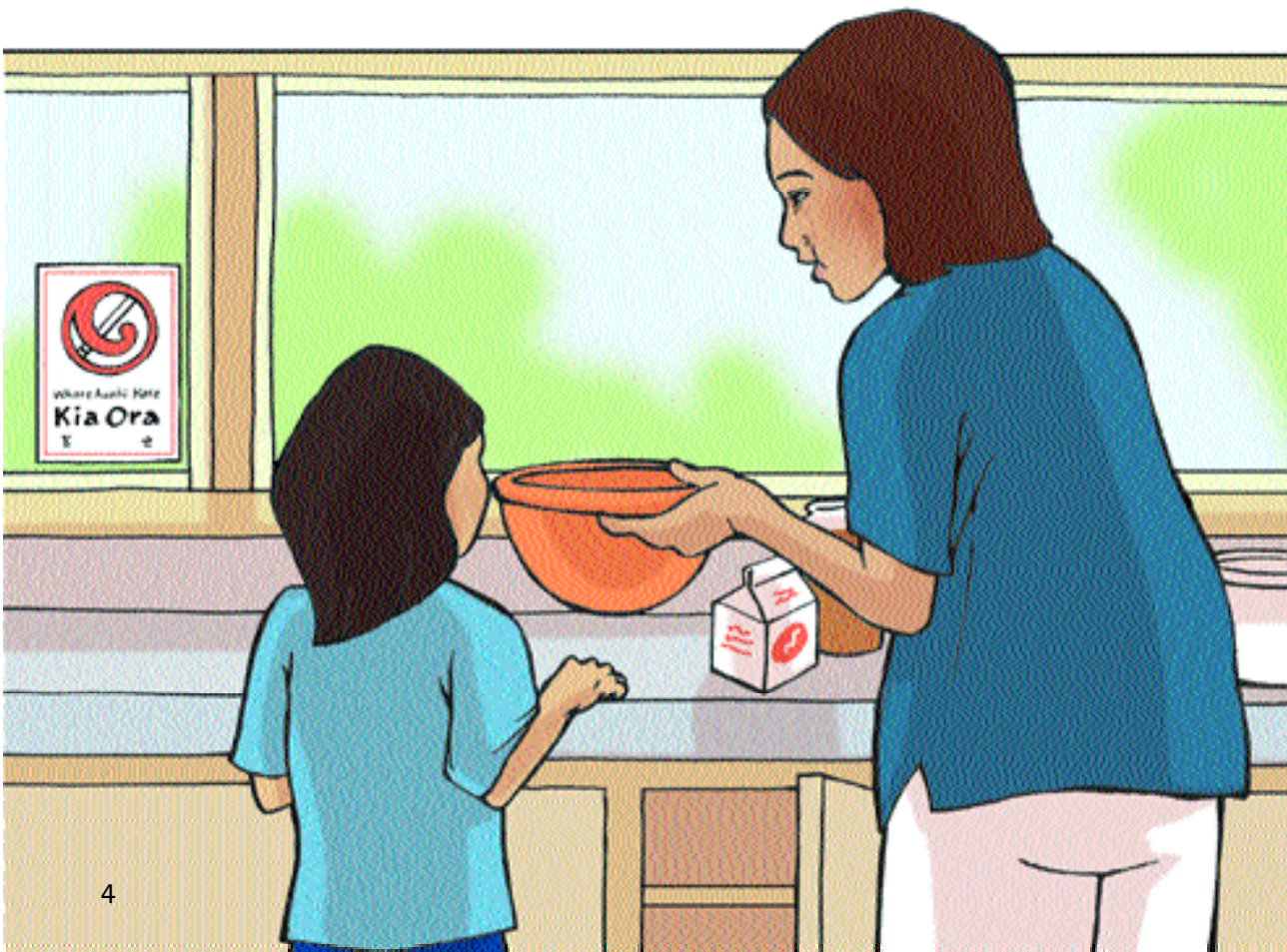
On the first Sunday of the month, the whānau would all gather at Nanny's house for Sunday dinner. Kara and her older brother Arana and all their cousins liked going to Nanny's. Nanny was the best cook in all of Aotearoa.

Kara remembered that they were going to Nanny's tomorrow.

Mum was making steamed puddings to take to Nanny's house. Everyone loved Mum's steamed puddings – especially with custard and whipped cream, since it was a special occasion.

"Can I help?" Kara asked Mum.

"Thank you, Kara. You can help me to whip the cream," Mum said, whistling while she worked.





"You sound happy, Mum."

"I am very happy, darling."

"Why?" Kara asked.

"I'll tell you tomorrow at Nanny's."

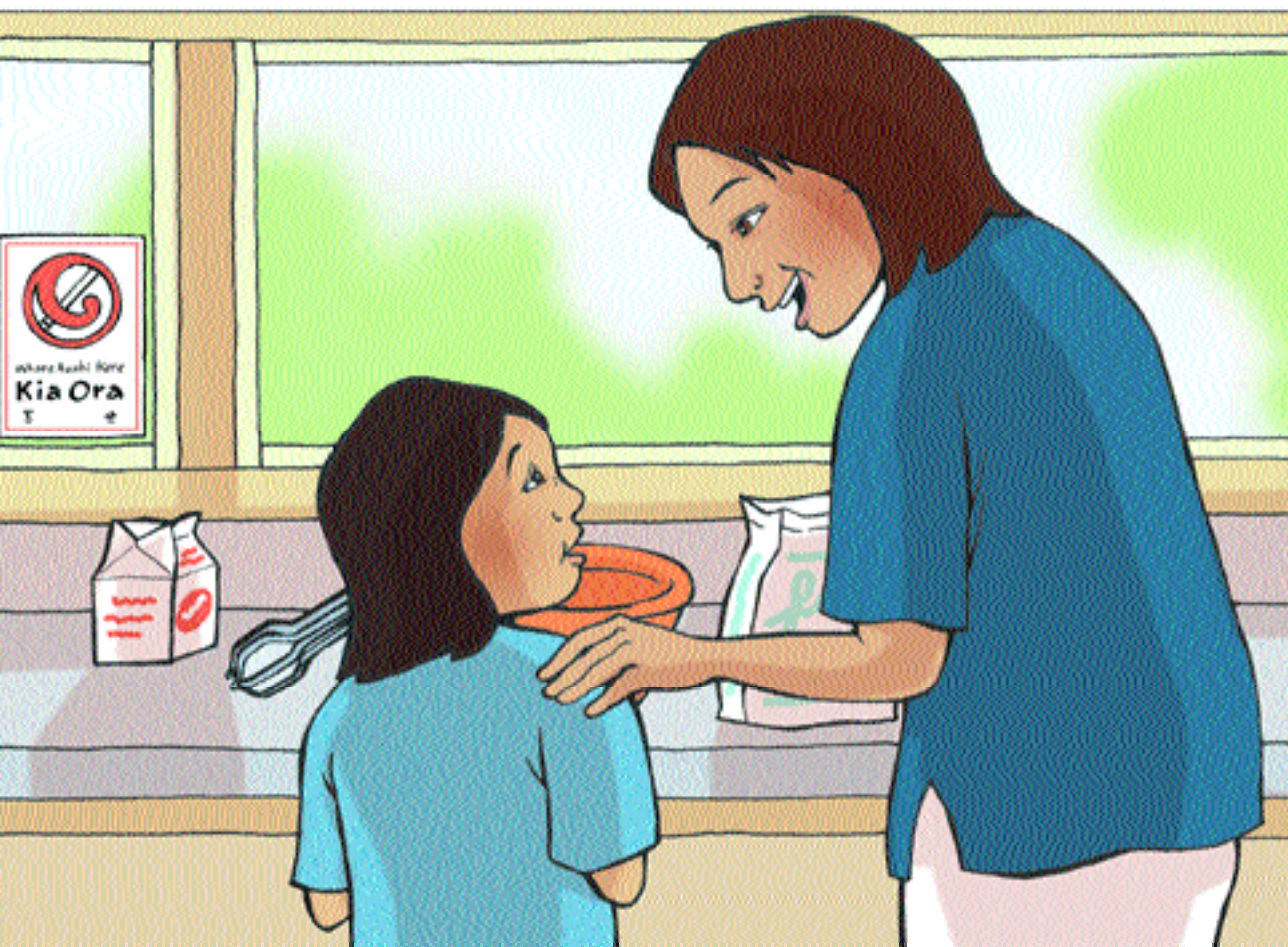
"But why can't you tell me now?"

"It's a surprise," said Mum, wiping a small blob of cream off Kara's nose.

"If you tell me now, I promise I won't tell anyone," Kara pleaded. "Please."

"Okay. This is our secret for now. Promise?"

"Promise." Kara said.



Kara felt very grown-up because her mum was about to share a secret with her.

"I'm pregnant." Mum said.

"You're who?"

"I'm pregnant. That means I'm going to have a baby."

“Wow, a baby ... you’re going to have a baby ... I’m going to have a little sister ... or a little brother. I’m going to be a big sister.” Kara was very excited. Mum laughed as Kara gave her lots of hugs and kisses.

Kara put her hands on Mum’s tummy. “Hello, in there. I’m Kara, your big sister,” Kara called.



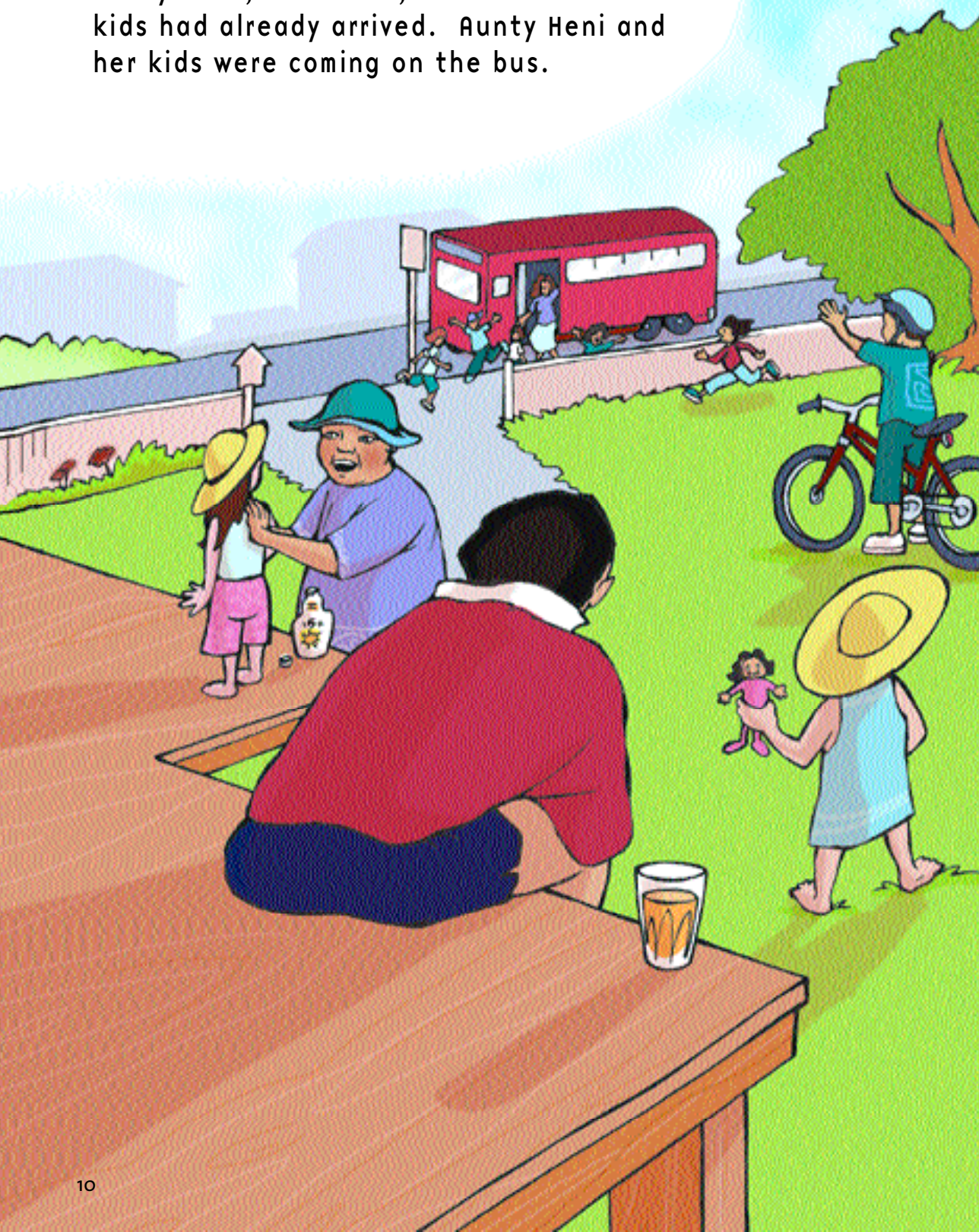
As she lay in bed that night, Kara thought about all the things she could do with the new baby. Kara drifted off to sleep feeling very happy.

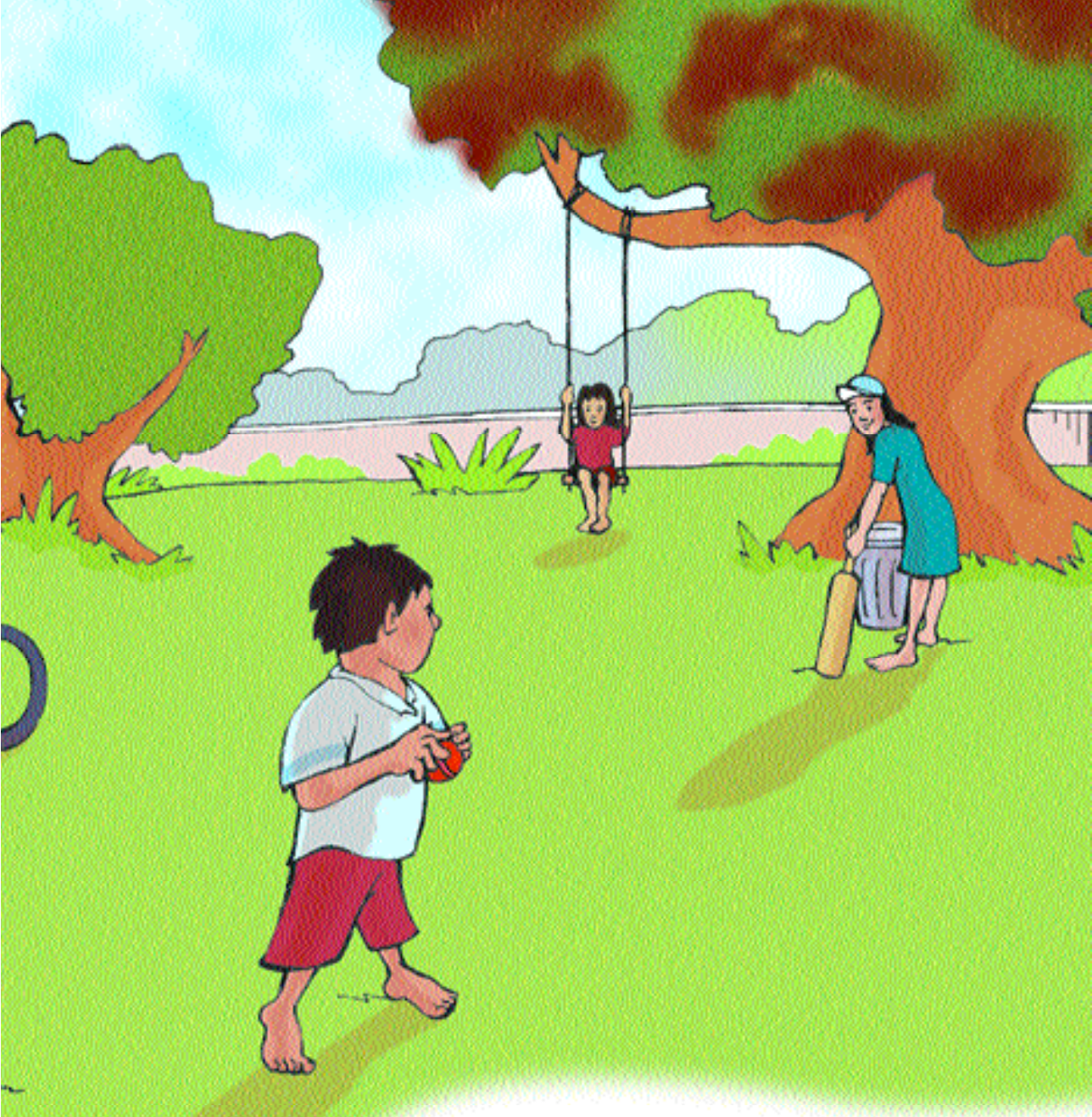




Just after Kara, Arana, Mum, and Dad arrived at Nanny's, Uncle Ben drove up in his new car. Kara and Arana ran to greet him. The children loved their Uncle Ben. He stubbed out his cigarette when he saw them coming towards him – he didn't like to smoke around them.

Aunty Lena, Uncle Piri, and their five kids had already arrived. Aunty Heni and her kids were coming on the bus.





Arana and Kara were happy to see all their cousins. Kara sat on the swing and watched her cousins playing. She wanted to tell them about their new baby, but she didn't. She had made a promise.

“Kua reri te kai,” Nanny called.
“Kai is ready.”

All the children lined up in the
bathroom to wash their hands.





When everyone was seated at the huge table, Uncle Piri said karakia.

While everyone was eating, Kara wondered when Mum was going to tell everyone the happy news.

"I'm ready for pudding," Arana said.

"Before we start dessert, we have an announcement," Dad said, standing up. "Moana is pregnant. We're going to have a baby."

Everyone cheered and clapped. Everyone was happy.

"Ka pai," Nanny said. "That's the best news I've heard for a long time."

Everybody laughed.



After dinner, the older children did the dishes. Mum went outside and sat under the huge pōhutukawa tree.

Kara watched as Mum put a cigarette into her mouth. She didn't light it, though. She seemed to be thinking. Kara thought too. She wondered what all the smoke might do to the new baby in Mum's tummy.

Then Mum stood up. She marched into the kitchen. She took the packet of cigarettes and her lighter and threw them into the rubbish bin. "That's it," she said. "I'm going to stop smoking. Right now."



"Good on you, sis. I'll help you," Uncle Ben said. "I've wanted to quit for a long time. Let's do it together."



Kara and Arana hugged Mum.

“We will help you, too, Mum,” said Arana.

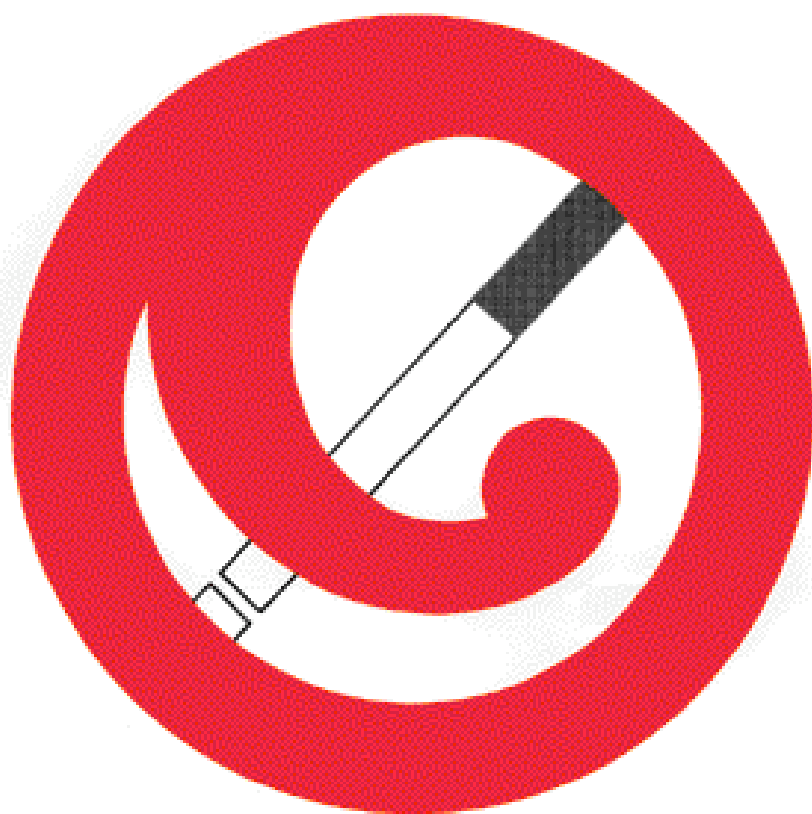
“Me too,” said Dad.

“Me too,” shouted all the cousins and aunties and Uncle Piri.

Everyone cheered and clapped. Everyone was happy.

“Ka pai,” Nanny said. “That’s the second best news I’ve heard for a long time.”

Everyone laughed.



Whare Auahi Kore **Kia Ora**



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