

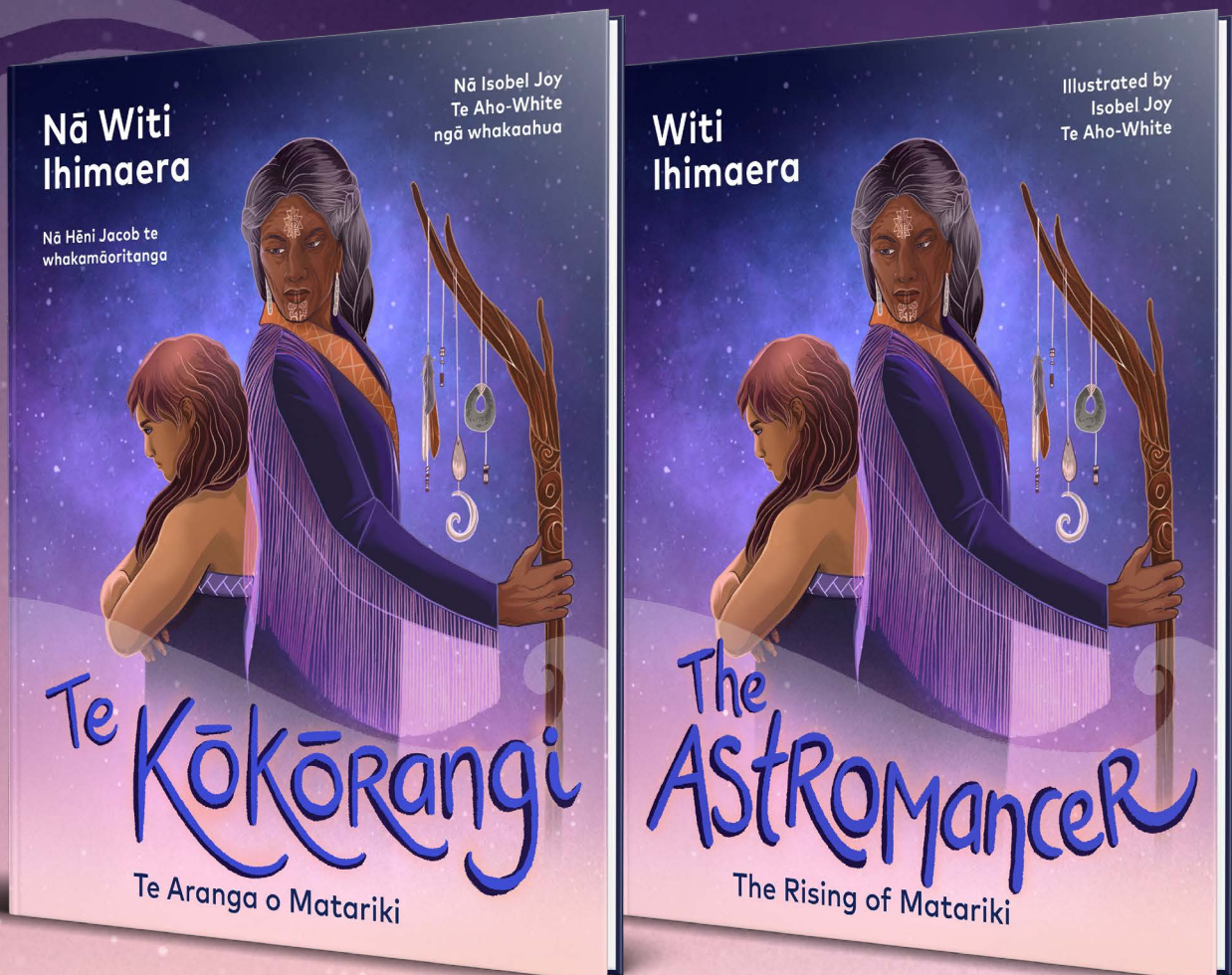


# The Astromancer

## TEACHER NOTES

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Written by Witi Ihimaera

Illustrated by Isobel Joy Te Aho-White

## BEFORE READING

1. You can tell a lot about a book before you even open it! Let's see what the clues are that we can get from the cover of this book.

What can you see?

How does what you can see help you understand what this book will be about?

Who do you think the two figures on the cover are?

2. What colours have been used on the cover? Why do you think they have been chosen?
3. What can you see on the staff that the woman is holding?  
What do you think these things represent?
4. Turn to the back of the book. What can you see? Describe.
5. What is the secondary title of the book? Why has Witi Ihimaera decided to use this description?

## DURING READING

### *Comprehension Questions*

**Chapter:**

1. What decision does Te Kōkōurangi make?
2. What is 'the leaping place into the heavens'?
3. What do the people of the plains call the observatory?
4. If Matariki is bright in the sky, what does that signify?
5. What is Te Waka O Rangi?
6. Who is Ruatapu?
7. What is Puanga?
8. In this chapter, Ariā becomes a leader. How?
9. What crucial event happens in this chapter?
10. What does Ariā discover is the 'gift to change everything'?







## Vocabulary

Here are some interesting words in te Reo from the story Witi Ihimaera has written.

- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| a. Pūhā       | f. Mahi     |
| b. Pā         | g. Iwi      |
| c. Kai        | h. Haka     |
| d. Karakia    | i. Mokopuna |
| e. Maramataka | j. Aroha    |

1. Use a glossary/ngā kupu to write down the definitions of these words in English.
2. Use them in a sentence. Check with your teacher to make sure you are using them correctly. Share with a partner.

## Characters

Aria and Te Kōkōrangī are two of the main characters in this book. Their relationship is one of the most important ones throughout the text.

- a. Why does Te Kōkōrangī choose Aria?
  - b. In your opinion, does Ariā deserve to be an apprentice? Why/not?
  - c. What changes do you see in Ariā by the end of the book?
1. How do these two main characters develop throughout the book? Divide two pages into three columns titled 'Beginning', 'Middle' and 'End' - one for Te Kōkōrangī and the other for Aria. Fill in the columns with your understanding of these characters throughout the text.

### Te Kōkōrangī

Beginning	Middle	End







## *Research and Creative Responses*

1. Choose one of your favourite pages from this book. Write a letter to either Witi Ihimaera or Isobel Joy Te Aho-White explaining why it is your favourite. You could talk about the way the author uses words, or the way the illustrator uses colour, composition, font, and shading
2. Research these Matariki-friendly activities. What are they?
  - a. te whai a Māui
  - b. taonga puoro
  - c. tā pōtaka
  - d. poutoti
  - e. karetao
3. An important part of Matariki is knowing who you are and where you have come from. Write your pepeha and practice for use during Matariki. You can use the website <https://pepeha.nz/create-pepeha> to help you if you're not sure where to start.
4. In groups of five, turn one part of *The Astromancer* into a play. You will need to cast Te Kōkōurangi and ; who else will you include in the play? Practice and perform for your class.
5. Food and the way it is produced is really important at Matariki. Research the four Māori gods (atua) that are thought to be most aligned with food:
  - a. Tāne-mahuta
  - b. Tangorua
  - c. Haumiatikitiki
  - d. Rongomatāne

If you are stuck, you can start here:

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/traditional-maori-religion-nga-karakia-a-te-maori/page-1>

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-hi-ika-maori-fishing/page-1>

6. Celebrate Matariki by having your own celebration with food (hākari). You can find more information about feasting in Te Ao Māori here: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/maori-feasts-and-ceremonial-eating-hakari>

Decide these things:

- a. Who will you invite?
- b. What will you cook?
- c. How will you decorate and dress the table?
- d. What karakia (blessing or prayer) can you learn for this event?

