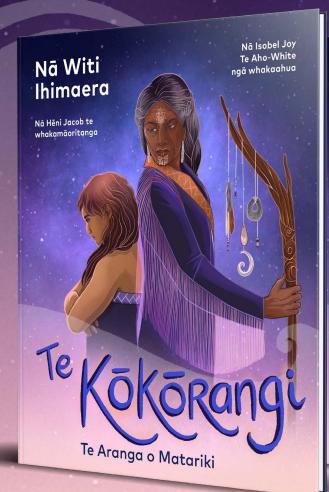
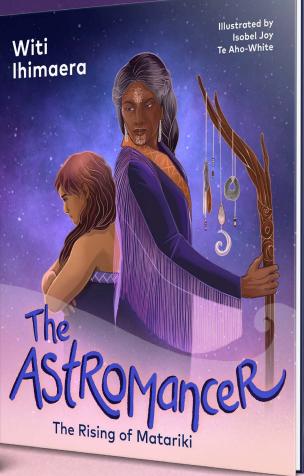


The Astromancer

TEACHER NOTES

By Lara Liesbeth May 2022





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 Kōkōrangi 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'

Myths, Legends, History and Storytelling

In this book, the author mixes mythological/historical figures from Te Ao Māori with fiction. Therefore, this story is a type of myth; in this case, a story concerning the early history of Aotearoa/New Zealand. It explains a natural phenomenon (the matariki star constellation and celebration of the Māori New Year), and involves supernatural beings or happenings - all signs of mythology in storytelling!

1.	What do you know about Matariki?
	Can you think of ways Matariki informs our daily lives in Aotearoa?
	Where have you heard about it before? Write your thinking below:
	The story of Matariki and what I know:
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2.	Witi Ihimaera says: 'Te Kōkōrangi is based on Hine-te-ariki, who lived long ago and had a pā on Tirotiro-whetū mountain. The star waka (Te Waka o Rangi) is even older but Ariā and the boys could be any young New Zealanders living today."
	Why do you think Witi Ihimaera has mixed mythology with new storytelling? Write your thinking below:
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3.	This book is called The Astromancer.
	What is astromancy? Who is an astromancer?
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4. Research ONE other myths or legends that you haven't heard before. It can be from Te Ao Māori or from a different culture. You may be surprised at the similarities from different countries! (If you are stuck, choose from the creation myth and characters described on page 7). Write this myth in your own words below. Myth/legend:

Vocabulary

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

a. Pūhā f. Mahi
b. Pā g. lwi
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 Kōkōrangi 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 Kōkōrangi 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 Kōkōrangi and the other for Aria. Fill in the columns with your understanding of these characters throughout the text.

Te Kōkōrangi

Middle	End
	Middle

Ariā

Beginning	Middle	End

2. Find quotes from the book to support your opinion. Add the quotes to these character development pages.

Illustrations

Isobel Joy Te Aho-White's illustrations are rich with colour and context. They complement Witi Ihimaera's storytelling and add richness to the words, as the best illustrations do.

Answer these questions:

1.	Colours are important in illustrations. Choose one full page illustration from the book and describe how colour is used, both literally (on the page) and symbolically (what the colours represent):

Why do you think Te Aho-White chose to use both colour and black and white illustrations?
How would you describe the illustrator's artistic style? How do you think she creates her pictures?

Research and Creative Responses

- 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 note sure where to start.
- 4. In groups of five, turn one part of The Astromancer into a play. You will need to cast Te Kōkōrangi 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. Tangoroa
 - 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?

