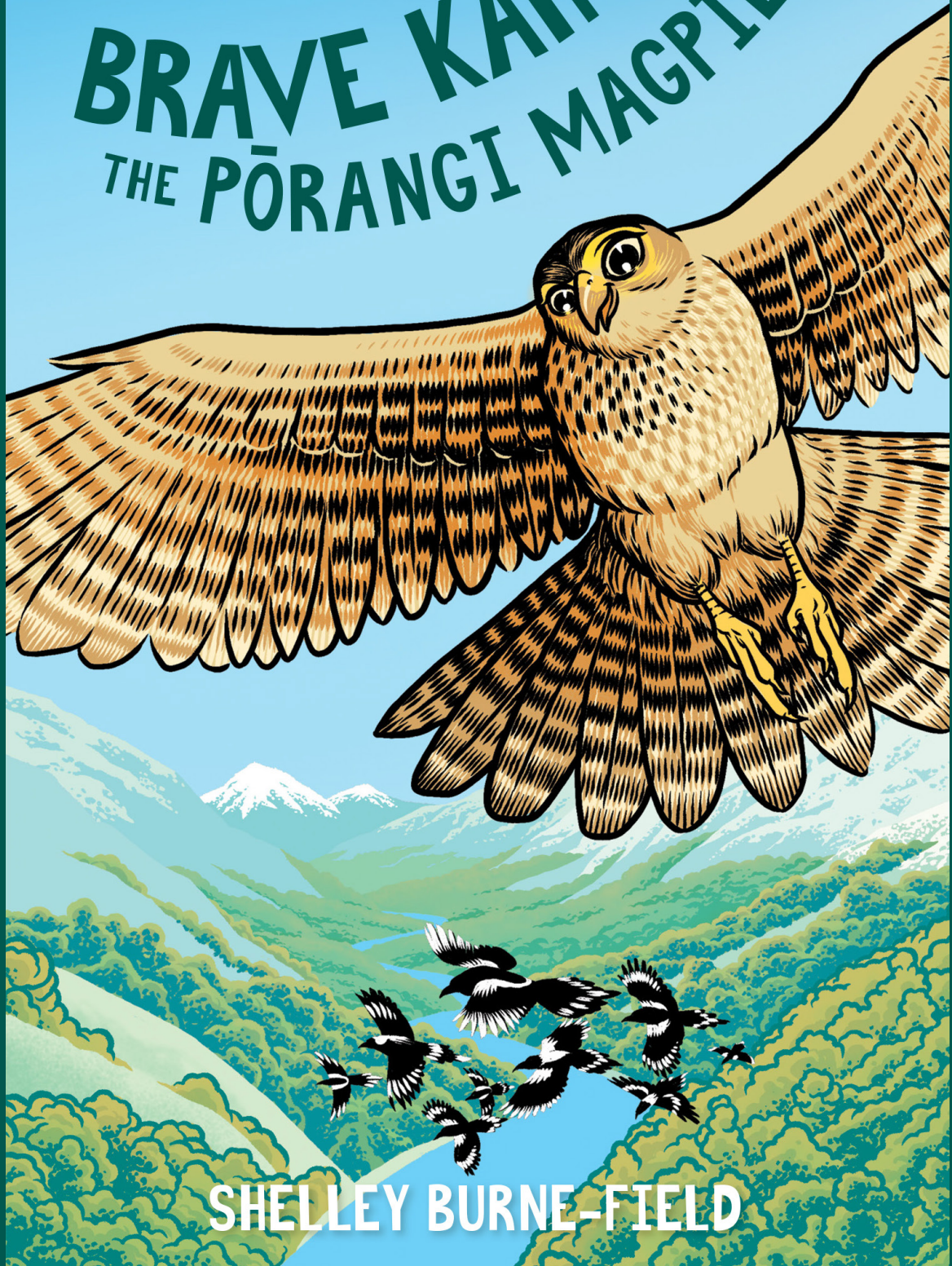


Can Poto save the day  
and get her whānau to safety?

# BRAVE KĀHU & THE PŌRANGI MAGPIE



SHELLEY BURNE-FIELD

# BRAVE KĀHU & THE PŌRANGI MAGPIE

SHELLEY BURNE-FIELD

An exciting and action-packed animal story featuring two kāhu sisters who must save their injured baby brother - before a coming flood destroys their home.

**Recommended for:** 7-12 year olds, junior fiction

**Themes:** family, sibling relationships, grief and loss, resilience, climate change, courage, autism, love and overcoming hate and division, learning to respect everyone's different strengths

**ISBN:** 9781991006608

## SYNOPSIS

Poto is the perfect fledgling – the apple of her father's eye and a natural at hunting and flying. Anything a kāhu is supposed to be good at, Poto can do best of all. She can't understand why her sister Whetū gets cross with her – it's not her fault she's good at everything! As for her baby brother Ari, he's so weird and annoying.

After their mother is killed by a flock of magpies, Poto and Whetū have to get an injured Ari to safety before a deadly foretold earthquake arrives, unleashing a flood and destroying their home. With the help of the birds and new friends they meet on the way, the hawk siblings journey through the Valley, keeping an eye out for a menacing flock of magpies who are on a mission to take back the Valley for their own.

Can they stop Tū the makipai and her flock from ruining the harmony of the Valley? Will aroha win out over hate? And will Poto realise that everyone has something special to offer, even if they can't do everything quite like she does?

# AUTHOR MOTIVATION

Have you ever seen a kāhu (Swamp Harrier Hawk) and one or three magpies swooping, squawking and fighting in the sky? This is the scene that inspired me to write *Brave Kāhu* and the *Pōrangī Magpie*. In my research, I also found a story about injured *Circus approximans* (the scientific name for kāhu) which were able to survive without feet! And also, one lived without a wing!



I had many people saying that if a bird is injured it will die, but I thought, hang on, what about kiwi? What about weka? What about all the flightless manu (birds) in Aotearoa NZ who survive the perils without being able to escape to the skies? Once I knew for sure that a kāhu could survive on the ground, it meant that the entire premise of my novel was believable – an injured hawk could survive for days if not weeks. I was so excited and the characters and landscape began to appear in my imagination.

# DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Where do you think the book is set? Do you recognise any of the landmarks or native plants?
2. Whānau is a strong theme in the book. How does being in a family shape the characters and the way they behave?
3. Poto is a perfect kāhu, what do you think she would be like if she was at your school?
4. What are some te reo words you learned while reading this book?
5. What do you think of the characters' names, and what it says about their personalities?

6. Poto's friend Nīkau has visions and can foretell future events, like how many (birds) can know when a storm is coming. What other animals can sense the future in this way?
7. Do you recognise any of the birdsong? Did any in the book stand out to you?
8. What is the 'beech mast' that causes the kiore (mouse) and stoat population to increase?
9. Finding 'peace' within ourselves and with others is a theme in the book. What do you think 'inner peace' may mean for the main characters? What about peace between characters or groups of characters?
10. There are some chapters that are full of action scenes! For example, crossing the arahanga bridge or fighting the toriura stoats. Which is your favourite and why?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shelley Burne-Field (Sāmoa, Ngati Mutunga, Ngati Rārua, Pākehā) is a kaituhituhi from Te Matau-a-Māui Hawke's Bay. She writes articles and creative non-fiction as well as fiction of all sorts, including short stories. This is her first children's story. She is an alumni of the Master of Creative Writing from Auckland University 2020 and also Te Papa Tupu mentoring programme. Her story 'Speaking in Tongues' was the only New Zealand Finalist in the 2022 Commonwealth Short Story Prize. Her work is now in print in anthologies around the world, and has appeared in Newsroom and on RNZ. Her story 'Pinching out Dahlias' is the most read short story published in Reading Room. Shelley is a proud member of the NZSA.