

## SHORT STORY

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order to have a better view. The flash boys and the pretty girls strolled past each other on the beach, in groups, going in opposite directions.

The place buzzed with gossip. Tui Tinopai said that the Parson had sent for Constable Morris to come and stop what he called "this blasphemy." Tui said Constable Morris couldn't find anything dealing with miracles in the Police Regulations and he didn't want to make a fool of himself. So he was watching the proceedings through field-glasses from the top of the cliffs, said Tui.

And Ripi said that the school-kids were boasting about old Tupara putting a makutu curse on Monday. They saw red fires flickering around his place all night. They kept well away. It's good-bye and no God-bless-you if you get on the wrong side of a tohunga.

Ripi said that Tupara had just sent Hoho the half-wit pedalling like mad on a bike he pinched from outside the church. Hoho disappeared in the direction of Wainui. That was where Maggie Peka lived.

Mrs. Tamahana wondered what Maggie Peka thought of Monday giving her the good-bye for this sideshow sort of business.

Presently Monday and his friends came down to the edge of the water and looked out over the swift-running tide. It looked a dreadful stretch of water to try to walk upon. The tide, rushing out, swept around the foot of a sheer rocky headland. You could see the whirlpools and the choppy places and the currents that sucked under the rocky ledges. The whole place seemed dark and terrible, and not at all like the sunny open waters of the bay.

Monday prayed. That quietened the gossiping buzz and focused all attention on Monday. Then he spoke to the people about Peter the fisherman who walked on the waves, and about miracles, and how everyone soon would have faith to believe. Monday's face shone and he spoke so feelingly that you were sure that God would give such a man power to do anything. Everyone was carried away by Monday's eloquence.

After that it all seemed to happen in a few winks of the eye. There was a scraggy pohutukawa tree leaning out over the waves at the beginning of the bluff, hanging on to the cliff by a few twisty old roots. Monday walked to this tree, took hold of the overhanging branch, and lowered himself down to the swirling water till his feet just about touched its surface. His band of followers gathered round singing a triumphant sort of hymn.

It looked very funny at first to see Monday in his best clothes with his panama hat and his buttonhole letting himself down into the sea. Then you listened to the singing and you remembered that he was going to walk on the water, not fall into the water. It made all the difference.

SOME swear that they saw Monday walk on the waves. Perhaps they were right. Things like miracles happen quickly, and you're not used to seeing such extraordinary events.

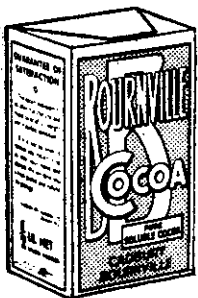
But as the singing ended, in the middle of the breathless hush as Monday poised himself on the tops of the waves just getting his shoes wet, there

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