

The picture in the paper

A SHORT STORY

Written for "The Listener" by

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I BET you know me, eh? I got the picture in the paper. You see him? In pretty nearly all the paper. Everybody see him. Everybody know me. They say, "Wah! That's Sammy. That his picture. Look. Sammy's picture in the paper." And boy, it's me all right. Underneath he say, "Sammy The Young Maori Hero." That's me. Pretty good, eh? When I go down the store and down the post office they all sing out, "Hey Sammy, you got some more picture in the paper?" Even the pakeha say, "Hello Sammy." Everybody know me. Pretty good, eh? You get the picture in the paper everybody know you. Look I show you. I got him here. See. That's me all right.

No right to call me the Maori though. The half-caste, eh? Pretty near the pakeha. Anna, my old woman, she pretty near the half-caste, and Ruka my father, he not very black. They shouldn't put Maori. You look at the picture. Not very black, eh?

'Course that a pretty long time ago. I wasn't here then. I been here long time, maybe a year, eh? No good in here. Too cold. No sun. But, they all know me. Too right they know me. I got the picture in the paper so everybody know me.

THAT'S while I'm at school, that picture. Miss Buckland she take him. She send him to the paper, too. That's when I leave. School all right for boys, but when you the hero with the picture in the paper, school no good then. Then you go down the Post Office and down the store, and sometimes stay up the pa and talk to the men because the hero, that's pretty good, eh? Too good for school. Miss Buckland she always say "You the big boy now, Sammy. When you gonna leave?" That's when I'm sixteen, but I say, "I like this school, Miss Buckland. We have the good funs — get the saw and make the sledge, and the racing car, and the aeroplane. Good funs." Then Miss Buckland she say, "You work hard Sammy, and get out of Standard 2." I pretty slow, eh? Got no brains. The pretty big dunce, eh? But I like that Standard 2. We have the good funs. I win all the races. Beat the other kids. I pretty near the boss of that school. The big fella. All the kids know me.

Then one day it rain pretty hard. Plenty more rain next day, too, so the flood in the river. Muddy, too, and the water pretty swift. After school young

Tuki he take his horse over the ford. All the kids say, "Don't you go over that ford, Tuki." And he say, "Too right I go over the ford." They tell him go over the swing bridge and leave his horse behind for to-day. So me and Miss Buckland inside doing sums and the kids all run in and yell, "Tuki gone over the ford."

Miss Buckland she tell me come out, and we run down the river. Tuki on his horse out in the middle and the horse fall. Wah! Go right under, eh. Miss Buckland jump in and swim and grab Tuki.

Then all the kids say, "You go too, Sammy. You the best swimmer." So I jump in and pretty soon grab Tuki and drag him out. Then they say, "Wah! Look. Miss Buckland getting washed down." So I run down the bank and jump in and drag her out. She all wet. Boy, she look funny. We all laugh.

Then pretty soon after when it's a sunny day, she take this picture and put him in the paper so everybody see me. Then all the men come and give me the medal and call me the hero. So I leave school and go down the store and show all the fella this picture. They all say, "You the pretty big hero, eh. Sammy? Less see your picture." The pakeha, too, they know me.

That's pretty good, eh? Everybody know you just like at school, only these all grown-up. Better when they grown-up. No good when they just kids.

Well that's pretty good for long time.

THEN one day Anna my old woman, she say, "Sammy, I don't want you hang round here all day. You get the job." That's no good, so I go down the Post Office and show the men this picture. Then pretty soon they laugh, and say, "We seen that one plenty times, Sammy. When you get some more picture in the paper, eh?" Those dirty Maori don't like this picture.

Well I easy get some more picture in the paper, so I go down the river, and when Tuki coming home from school, I push him in the river, then jump in and drag him out. But no flood this time, and Tuki tell his old man, and pretty soon his old man come along and give me the pretty big hiding.

When I go home up the pa, Anna say, "You got the job?" I say "No." She say, "You better get the job. I don't want you here. Pretty soon the new baby come and not enough room for you. You better get the job pretty quick."

Well, that's no good. Not the hero now, just the bloody nuisance, eh? If I go down the post office everybody laugh and say, "When you get some more picture in the paper, eh, Sammy?" So I say, "Pretty soon now I get some more medal and the new picture in the paper." Then they laugh and I think,



"Pretty soon I show those dirty Maori. I get the new picture in the paper, then I bet they don't laugh. Then they all come over and say, Show us your new picture, Sammy: Boy, that'll be good."

WELL, pretty soon old Rangī die, and we have the big tangi up the pa. All get shickered. Only me. I don't get shickered, cos they all laugh at me. Even the kids they laugh at me now if I don't catch them.

Next day, Anna start moaning and groaning and rolling on the floor. I get pretty scared, eh, so I go out. The kids all look in, but everybody else asleep. The kids try and wake up Ruka, but he asleep, too. And all the time Anna keep moaning and rolling and the kids say, "This the new baby, Sammy. You better get the nurse pretty quick." So I go out the back, but I can't find the horse. He off in the tea-tree and I can't see him.

Then I get the big idea. I hurry and get the nurse for Anna's new baby and bring her here quick enough and then maybe I get the picture in the paper again. That a pretty good idea, cos then they don't laugh at me, and perhaps the men give me some more medal.

Well, I get pretty wild cos I can't find the horse. Too thick in the tea-tree. I give him the good hiding if I find him. Boy, I get plenty fierce. Then I look down the hill and see old Parker's car at the store. I rush down and grab the wheel and start her up. Old Parker he come out the store and he yell, "Sammy, you get out that car pretty damn quick." I say, "Anna getting the new baby. I going for the nurse." Then he run over and drag me out and smack my face. Well, that no good. I gotta hurry, so I get fierce. I bash him on the head and hop in and boy, I speed her along. No good at the corner, though. We going too fast and she skid against the tree. Smash all the side, eh? Hurt my arm, too.

So I go back up the pa, and Anna sitting up cursing her belly-ache. She say, "These bloody tangi no good. Eat too much."

Then pretty soon old Hogan the cop come and take me off to clink. He take me all the way to town in his car. Boy, that a pretty good ride. He got the new Ford V8, eh? Plenty power for those big hills. He speed her along. Boy, she can lick. No good in town though, cos

they shove me in clink. Pretty cold in here, too. No good for the Maori. Get the cough, eh?

BUT pretty soon I get out. Boy, then I show them. I give them the big surprise cos I got the new picture in the paper. See. This little one. In the *Truth*, eh? What they say when I show them the new picture in the *Truth*? They say, "Wah! Sammy got some more picture in the paper. Less see your new picture, Sammy." Then I show them. Boy, that'll be good. They say, "You the hero again, Sammy." Then I bet they don't laugh. They tell me get some more picture in the paper, and by golly I soon get some more. Too small though, eh? Which one you think the best? I like the first one the best.

Boy, that's a good big picture.

LISTENINGS

Perpetrated and illustrated by
KEN ALEXANDER

DER TAG-END!

A CAPTURED German officer is reported to have told the Russians that, when they heard that Hitler had taken over supreme command, they said "This is the end!"

But they probably said it more tactfully than that. Something in this style: "Our splendid Führer has taken over the army."

"What, not the whole army? Heil Hitler! Gott save the army!"

"Ja! Der whole army! Every retreating German soldier will now be led back by our clever Führer. Heil — and farewell!"

"What splendid news! Our Führer, who was a corporal in the last war and is a wash-out in this war, is to guide us in our great advance back into Germany. Heil Hitler! What a blow!"

"Is it not a grand thing that our Führer, who despises judgment and goes by intuition, should guide our destiny? Heil! We're up a gum tree!" "Ja! It is indeed true that our future is in our good Führer's hands. Heil Hitler! Our future is behind us!"

"What luck! Now we need fear no more. Where hope is not, fear is not. Heil Hitler!"

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