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## WORK

HEY all bought new hats for the job-felts, with wide brims. Toi said they would keep the dust out of their eyes. The hats fitted well, except that Piri's hat would not keep down over his bushy hair. He wore it on one side. On the other side the black, glossy hair spread out to the edge of the brim. They were coloured shirts and grey slacks. Over these Toi wore overalls. He was the only one allowed to handle the drill.

Sometimes, while they were waiting for Toi to cut a new line, Piri and Heta would practise the double throw with the picks. If Ken, the gang boss, came along, he would scowl and say, "Get on with the job!"

Piri and Heta liked best to work the lever that loosened the rails. As they sat facing each other they would talk, sometimes sing. Their laughter rang out even above the noise of the drill.

But Piri was not happy. At the house where they had a room they were always being told to be quiet. At home there was always plenty of noise. Everybody sang. Everybody laughed. Nobody worked as hard as Toi was doing with the drill. Now, at night, Toi was too tired to go out or to sing the songs with them.

"Community tonight? Do the sticks?" Piri asked as he and Heta worked the

"The pictures," Heta replied. "I take the kotiro to the pictures. Pakeha girl. eh?"

"Whee!" There was disappointment in Piri's voice. "You promised to show me that throw."

"I show you when we have the spell," Heta promised.

The previous night, at the Community Centre, they had been doing the stick game. When the game was over Heta had got up from the floor and picking up one of the long sticks. twirled it around and around in his hands. Throwing it into the air while it was whirling fast he had caught it on his forearm, then on his shoulder and finally, on the bent forearm, all in perfect rhythm. Piri had tried it again and again, but without success.

Now as they worked the lever back and forth Piri felt lonelier than ever.

Heta was going out with a girl and Toi would be tired and go to bed. He would have to go to the Community Centre alone.

A Short MARIE

A great longing for his village filled him. All the time, day time, night time on the marae everybody was happy. Everybody worked but they could stop in the work to talk and laugh, to have the joke.

He thought of the three years at High School. Walking two miles every day to catch the launch which took them across the river. Then another mile on the other side to the school. What was the good of it all? Now it was over and there was no work.

When the three boys had come to the city in search of jobs they found that hundreds of Maori boys had lately come to town, Some, a few, were lucky.



They had got jobs as apprentices, some in offices. And they had been able to get accommodation in a hostel. But the hostel was small and could not take a quarter of their number. Piri and Heta and Toi had slept in the park for three nights. Then they had found a small room in a tumbledown house in a back street. They had their meals out.

A LITTLE drizzle started. Piri jumped up. "Come on, Heta!" he called. "The rain! We can't work in the rain!" He picked up the big broom, which was used to sweep the lines when a

Story by

INSLEY

tram came along. and ran for the shelter of a shop verandah. Heta followed him, laughing.

Again and again Piri twirled the broom, but when he came to throw it into the air, and tried to catch it on his outstretched arm he would miss and the broom would fall to the ground. Then Heta took the broom and showed him. How easy it looked! Several of the shopkeepers came out on to the pavement to watch. Toi stopped the drill and came, too. Then Ken came over to talk to a man who was standing in his shop doorway.

Piri had the broom again. He twirled the broom fast and faster, threw it and caught it just as Heta had done on arm, shoulder, and bent forearm. He practised it again and again.

The drizzle stopped. Heta and Toi went back to work. Piri still stood on the edge of the pavement twirling the broom. "Back to work!" Ken called. 'The rain's over."

Piri put the broom over his shoulder and walked slowly back,

Ken turned to the man in the door-"They're bone lazy!" he said way. loudly. "You have to drive them all the time!'

"Oh, I don't know," the man answered. "They've covered a lot of ground since yesterday."

"They waste too much time," Ken grumbled.

AFTER three weeks of working on the tram lines Piri decided to go back home. It was too lonely and sad in the town. Nobody laughed while they worked. Nobody sang. Even the people walking along the streets looked sad.

Anyway, just breaking up the pavement, driving the pick in, sorting the heavy pieces and throwing them into heaps-was it for this that he had gone to secondary school? He looked at Toi whose whole body was shaken by the drill. Toi was getting sad, too. Sad and tired. He had been a smart boy at school.

Piri leaned on his pick, his eyes on Toi. Then he saw the gang boss at the end of the line, watching him. He picked up two of the shovels and, with a fcot on each, using them as stilts. he walked towards him. He smiled broadly as he saw Ken's face flush with anger. Piri stopped when he came level with him and, still balancing on the shovels, said, "I take the sack, Ken."

He jumped down, put the shovels one inside the other and laid them on