

Maori Picture Book A First

A first in many ways will be the release next month of a Maori picture book *Te Kuia me te Pungawerewere* by Patricia Grace.

For the author, a well known Maori writer, it's her first children's picture book and also a first for the illustrator Robyn Kahukiwa. And if that's not enough, the producers Kidsarus 2 are also claiming line honours for their collective effort.

The old woman and the spider tells the story in text and pictures of the rivalry between the two at the art of weaving. After much arguing the two agree to let the visiting grandchildren decide the best weaver.

ENCOURAGE ART

Patricia Grace wrote the book in late 1978 in response to a request from Julie Grenfell of Kidsarus 2, a collective group of volunteers wanting to encourage local writers and publishers. The group's comprised of teachers, editors and parents with the specific aim of seeing that quality books reflecting the multicultural nature of New Zealand are published. It was through Kidsarus 2 that an arts council grant was obtained to pay illustrator's royalties in advance and from the New Zealand Literary Fund and IYC Telethon Trust a publishing subsidy. For the Maori edition of the book translated by Syd Melbourne of Waikato University and Keri Kaa of Wellington Teachers College, a special subsidy from the Maori Education Foundation was obtained.

DREAM SLEEPERS

The illustrator Robyn Kahukiwa has been painting for ten years with many awards (Otago Centennial; N.Z. Academy Fine Arts Exhibition) to her credit, and some of her work in private collections overseas. She did the cover of Patricia Grace's 'The dream sleepers and other stories' but 'The Kuia and the spider' is her first attempt at book illustrations. Robyn says she found it invaluable working with Pat as there were a lot of small points that usually miss out on getting put across. For instance in 'Te Kuia me te Pungawerewere' the grand-

Te Kuia me te Pūngāwerewere

Patricia Grace



Ko ngā whakaāhua nā Robyn Kahukiwa

Ko te huri ki te reo Māori nā Syd Melbourne rāua ko Keri Kaa

Front cover of Maori edition of 'The kui and the spider' by Patricia Grace, published December by Longman Paul Ltd in association with Kidsarus 2 Inc. (photo by Athol McCredie).

children and the old lady have various shades of skin and hair colouring and mixtures of Pakeha and Maori, which were discussed and decided on how they should be.

Since illustrating the book, Robyn has been offered work on other

books and has also received a grant from MASPAC which will enable her to take a year off teaching in 1982 to research into Maori myths and legends and specifically their symbolic and artistic content with particular reference to women.

An extract from *Te Kuia me te Pungawerewere* by Patricia Grace.

Once there was a kuia/ who made mats and baskets
In the corner of her kitchen lived a spider who made webs/
One day the spider called out to the kuia/
Hey old woman, my weaving is better than yours/
The kuia called back to the spider/
spider your weaving is koretake/
it's only good for catching flies.
Yours is only good for sitting on called the spider/
And they argued and argued ...