



SCHOOL JOURNAL
STORY LIBRARY

ONCE A PANTHER



BY VICTOR RODGER ▲ ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHEL MULIPOLA

School Journal Story Library is a targeted series that supplements other instructional series texts. It provides additional scaffolds and supports for teachers to use to accelerate students' literacy learning.

Once a Panther has been carefully levelled. While the contexts and concepts link to English and social sciences at level 4 of the curriculum, the text has a reading year level of years 5 to 6.

Teacher support material (available at www.schooljournalstorylibrary.tki.org.nz) contains key information to help teachers to provide the additional support and scaffolding that some students may need to meet the specific reading, writing, and curriculum demands of *Once a Panther*.



ONCE A PANTHER

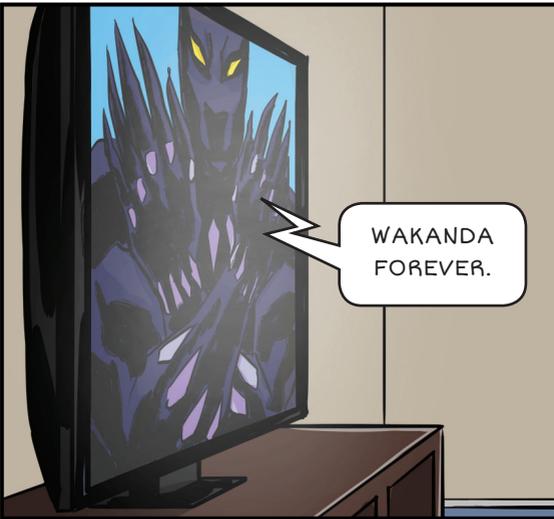
by Victor Rodger

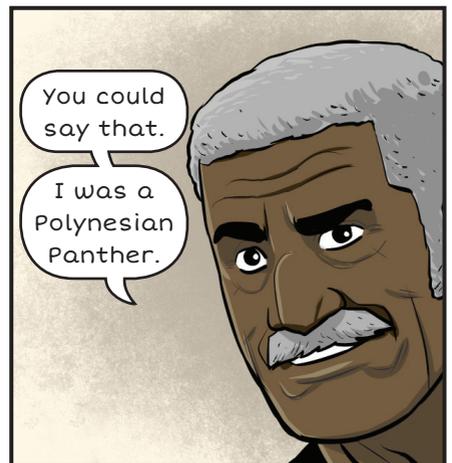
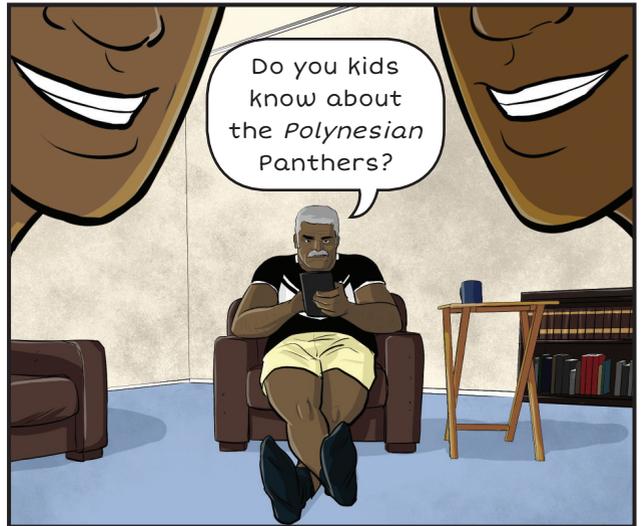
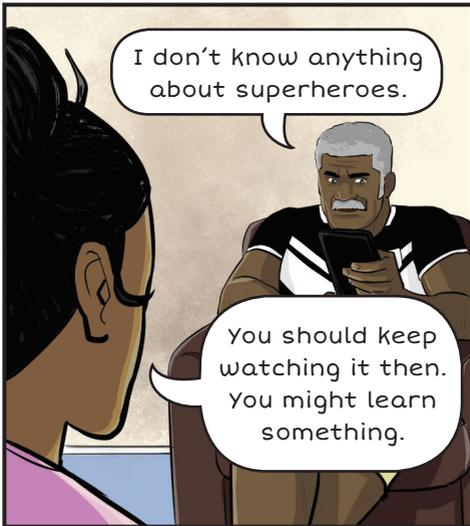
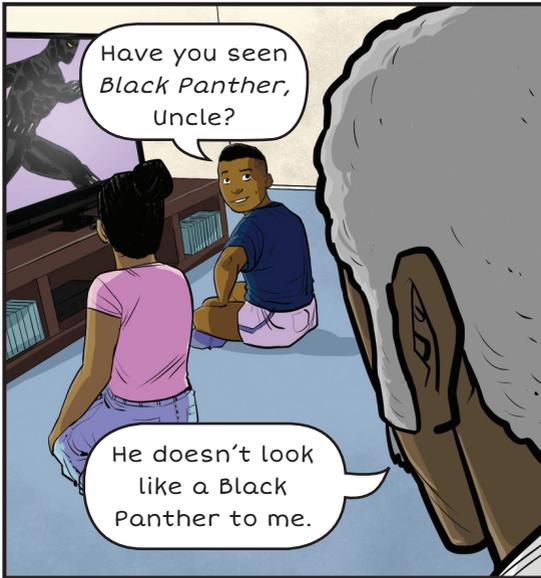
illustrations by
Michel Mulipola

Ministry of Education



AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, 2019





NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, 1969



It all started in the United States with the *real* Black Panthers. They were a group of African Americans fighting for social justice.



There was a lot of racism in America, and the Panthers wanted to make life better for their people.

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, 1971



Eventually, the same demands were made here by the Polynesian Panthers.

See, things were very different in New Zealand when I was growing up. There was a lot of prejudice ...



If you'd told me you were Pacific Islanders when you rang, I could've saved you the trouble of coming to see the flat in the first place.



... a lot of racism.



Our parents just put up with it. They didn't react. That's how they were brought up.



But some of us young ones wanted to do something about it.

And that's how the Polynesian Panthers started.



Your Auntie Lei was at uni back then. She took me to one of the first Panther meetings at a community centre in Auckland.





Lei and the others were always talking about politics and protest, but I didn't really get it.



I mean, I got that life was hard for Islanders and Māori and the Panthers wanted to make things better.

I saw how they set up homework centres ...



... how they helped people with dodgy landlords.



But still, I didn't really get it ... until the dawn raids.

By then, it was the mid-seventies. Muldoon's government was cracking down on illegal immigrants.



We've got to control our immigration.

We can't let a FLOOD come here and swamp us.

Frank Gill - Minister of Immigration

KIWIS MUST COME FIRST!

But they weren't targeting all illegal immigrants, like the ones from Britain or America.



Just the ones from the Islands. They called us overstayers.

Police officers would blitz us on the streets. If you couldn't show them your passport on the spot, you'd end up in a cell.



Passport?

Passport?
I live in Ponsonby!



You're coming with us.

If that wasn't bad enough, the police would burst into people's houses in the early morning, when everyone was still in bed.

BANG! BANG! BANG!



That's why they called them dawn raids.



It even happened to us.



We need to see your passports.



Mum and Dad didn't speak English very well. They didn't have a clue what was going on.

But your Auntie Lei, she stood up to those cops ...

Here! We have all our paperwork.



... and they left.



Our cousin next door wasn't so lucky.



How many people live here?

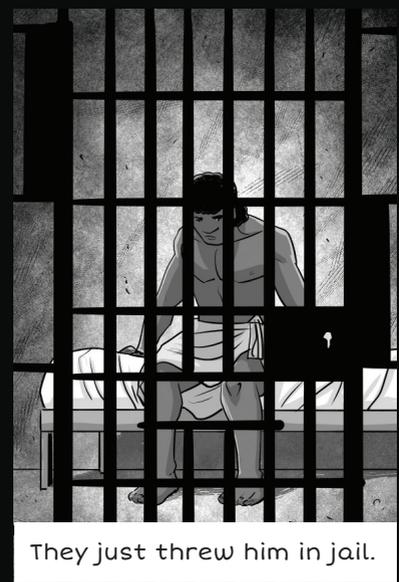


No, please! Leave my son! He's a good boy!

He doesn't have a visa.



It was really cold that morning, but they didn't let him put on a shirt - or shoes.



They just threw him in jail.

Not long after that, they
deported him back to Sāmoa.



DEPARTURES

Passengers Only

I'll never forget the look
on Auntie Losa's face.



I mean Feke -
he was tough.



0615 LOS ANGELES
0655 APIA



But in the end, even he
was crying like a baby.

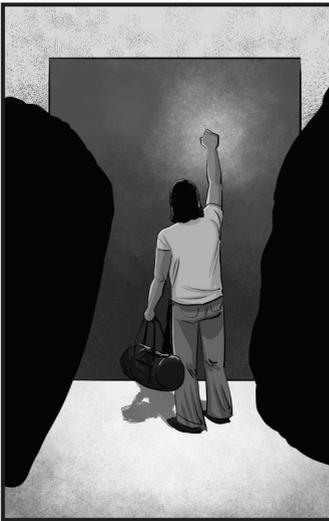


DEPARTURES

Passengers Only

Tōfā
soifua.





You should've heard them on the radio. They were spewing!



How dare these people come at such an ungodly hour!

What a crack up.



Yeah. It was funny. But we were making an important point. We were fighting for what was right. We always did.

In 1978, we fought for Māori land rights at Bastion Point.



And we protested against the 1981 Springbok rugby tour. Back then, South Africa had apartheid. Black people didn't have the same rights as white people.

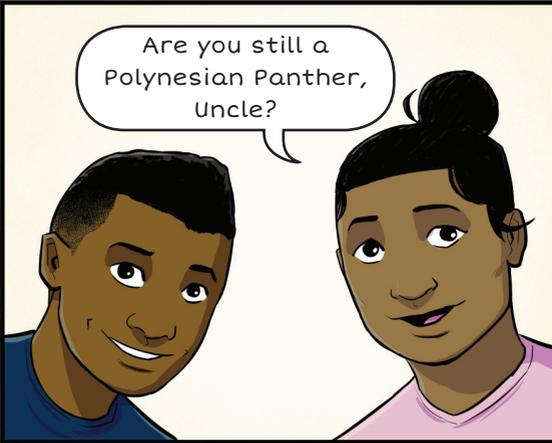


We had to take a stand.

We've come a long way,
but there's still a lot to be
done. The fight goes on.



Are you still a
Polynesian Panther,
Uncle?



Once a
Panther,
always a
Panther.



Mean.



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TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

New Zealand Government

