



Rona and the Moon

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Rona and her husband, Tamanui-te-rā did not have a happy marriage. In fact, their marriage was a rocky affair full of arguments and misunderstandings. They had married in a traditional taumau ceremony whereby they were chosen for each other by their grandparents and leaders of their respective tribes. Taumau marriages were quite common and were often to secure blood lines or align certain tribes with others. Most times these marriages would grow into happy unions between the chosen couple, but from Day One, Rona and Tamanui-te-rā found they didn't have much in common. To make things worse, on the night of their wedding there was a downpour, the marae was flooded and Rona's whānau were forced to sleep in a sodden whare. This was the cause of the first argument between Rona and Tamanui-te-rā – unfortunately for them, it was only the beginning.

Over the years that followed, Rona and Tamanui-te-rā continued to battle with each other. They argued over anything and everything – doing chores, fetching water, gathering food, Anything that could possibly come between them, did. Rona and Tamanui-te-rā were oblivious to the fact that their arguing was painful for everyone else around them. The people of the village tried to set a good example for Tamanui-te-rā and Rona to teach the couple to live together in harmony, but unfortunately the unhappy couple could hear nothing but their own critical voices.

One summer's night when the moon was full and Rona and Tamanui-te-rā had gone to bed they began to argue over who was going to fill their tahā (water containers). The reason they had no water in the first place was because they were both too busy arguing during the day to realise the tahā were empty. When Rona told Tamanui-te-rā that she was thirsty, he turned over in his bed and pretended to be asleep.

“Don't pretend you can't hear me. I said I'm thirsty!”

“Well go and get some water. You’ve got legs.”

“Typical lazy attitude. Ever since we got married you’ve done practically nothing!”

“I do nothing? I’m the one who caught the fish today!”

“And I prepared the vegies and cooked your fish, remember?”

“I remember alright – it was burnt!”

“It wasn’t burnt; you’ve just got no taste.”

“Huh!”

“Huh!”



Rona lay in the darkness fuming. When Tamanui-te-rā started snoring, Rona couldn’t take any more and stormed out of the whare. She stomped down the path carrying the empty tahā, muttering to herself. “Useless ... good for nothing ... and always moaning. Moan! Moan! Moan! Actually he’s good for something: moaning! The best moaner in the pā!”

Rona had no idea that her words were being carried up into the still night and that the large full moon, Marama, in the sky was listening. As Rona walked along the path, a breeze pushed clouds across the face of the moon, blocking the light and casting a dark shadow. Rona stumbled in the sudden darkness and fell to the ground grazing her arm. Her tahā scattered in front of her. Dazed, Rona felt around the ground for her tahā and gathered them up. As she stood up, the clouds passed. Boiling with anger, Rona looked up at Marama and cursed. “You stupid, inconsiderate moon! Couldn’t you see what I was doing or are you blind? Even the stars have more sense – at least they keep shining. It’s just stupidity, that’s what it is! Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!”

Marama felt no pity for Rona or her temper and had soon heard enough of her insults. “Be careful what you say, lest you be made to pay.”

Rona just laughed at the moon and carried on with her insults. After fifteen minutes of continuous barrage, Marama could take no more so he reached down out of the sky towards Rona. Rona saw Marama coming and tried to run, but he blinded her with his light and she had no way to escape. Rona grabbed a ngaio tree growing on the side of the track, but Marama eventually pulled her and the tree up into the sky. Rona floated up into the clear night so petrified she was lost for words.

Tamanui-te-rā searched for Rona the next day but found nothing. He asked others to help him search, but all they found was a hole at the side of the track where the ngaio tree had once grown. The people of the village were sad that Rona had disappeared. Tamanui-te-rā couldn't understand what had happened and he spent many nights feeling sorry for how he had treated Rona. He wished that he could have another chance to show her that he could be a decent husband.

At first Rona resented Marama for what had happened. She tried to argue with him but instead of arguing, he made her feel welcome and treated her with kindness. Over time, Rona realised she had no reason to argue, instead she told Marama about her life on earth and how unhappy she had been in her marriage. She also grew a large garden, wove garments out of the stardust and taught herself how to build new rooms onto the huge house that they shared.



One day Marama asked Rona if she would like to return to earth. He had grown to love Rona but didn't want her to stay against her will. Rona had come to love her new life and also knew that she had fallen in love with Marama. Although it was hard to leave her family, Rona knew that her decision to stay was what she wanted.

Marama was very happy with Rona's decision, and he gave her a special gift, a taonga that was handed down to him by his great grandmother. The gift was a korowai, a cloak adorned with stars and woven with magic. With this korowai and from that time on, Rona became the controller of tides, Rona-whakamau-tai. From her home in the sky, Rona would control the sea, the rivers and all large bodies of water. And because people are also largely made up of water, she would strongly influence their emotions, knowing from experience that being in control of her emotions was an important part of finding true happiness.

One night when the full moon rose over the small village where Rona had once lived, Rona stood looking down at her whānau and relations, happy with her new life. When her whānau looked up at the moon, they saw Rona wrapped in her beautiful korowai holding the ngaio tree and tahā. They knew then that Rona was finally happy.

Tamanui-te-rā was sad to begin with, but he too eventually accepted that Rona was happy where she was. Years later Tamanui-te-rā married again by which time he had learnt to be the best husband that he possibly could be, sharing responsibilities, communicating effectively and talking through disagreements with his new partner.

Rona-whakamau-tai, the guardian of tides lived happily with Marama, the moon. And to this day when the moon is full Rona can be seen in her magical korowai, still holding the ngaio tree and tahā in her hands.

