



· M A R A K I H A U ·

Maraki hau is one of the Maori monsters, the Taniwha.

These horrible creatures are the spirits of the dead men, the ancestors of the Maori, the host and inhabitant of the New Zealand coast and the navigators, of the bodies that feed themselves.

The Maraki hau have a long tail, similar to that of a fish, and the human arms and head. Its forked and hollow tongue, which serves to suck, is typical of these marine beings.

This Taniwha is associated with the Arawa tribe, of which it is protective.

The Taniwha can be at the same time evil beings or guardians, especially of their own tribe. Some live in caves, others in rivers and lakes, and others in the sea, and they have supernatural powers. They can cause earthquakes and tidal waves, although if they are respected and revered, they help their people.

To calm a taniwha, the Maori must offer gifts, for example the first fruits of the harvest, or a green branch accompanied by a spell.





Marakihau is a creature originating from **NEW ZEALAND**

Current population: 600.000



One of the last pacific islands colonized by the Austronesians, New Zealand remained virgin until about the tenth century. The navigators who discovered it came from eastern Polynesia (Cook Islands, including Hawaii), and arrived in waves over the next four centuries. According to Maori legends, the first settlers arrived in seven canoes, each of which founded its own tribe.

The settlement gave the Polynesians a cultural change propitiated by the new ecosystem: from a tropical climate and abundant natural resources, where they practiced fishing and gathering, moved to a temperate climate, where food was scarce and hunting a necessity.

The Maori society, much more bellicose than the original Polynesian,

was of an aristocratic type, even the slaves existed. Each of the great tribes, independent of each other, bore the mythical name of one of the canoes of the original fleet, and was divided into secondary tribes and families.

Although in the first centuries they were mainly dedicated to hunting moas, they ended up causing their extinction, so they had to evolve towards agriculture. The shortage also caused frequent wars between the tribes, and the construction of fortifications. By the eighteenth century, war was the usual way of life of the Maori, who used to practice cannibalism with enemy prisoners. The collection of enemy heads was also common.

At the beginning of the 19th century, contacts with European whalers became more frequent. The access to firearms on the part of the Maories intensified the wars, arriving at the extermination of several tribes. The settlers, who multiplied when discovering gold reserves in the territory, also attacked the Maori, enslaving and kidnapping many of them and murdering between 10 and 50% of the population. In 1840 they declared the island British protectorate.

Having become a minority on the island and deprived of their lands, the Maori culture was on the verge of extinction at the beginning of the 20th century. However, he managed to recover and recover his pride. Today the Maori account for 15% of the population, and their language is still alive with some 120,000 speakers.