

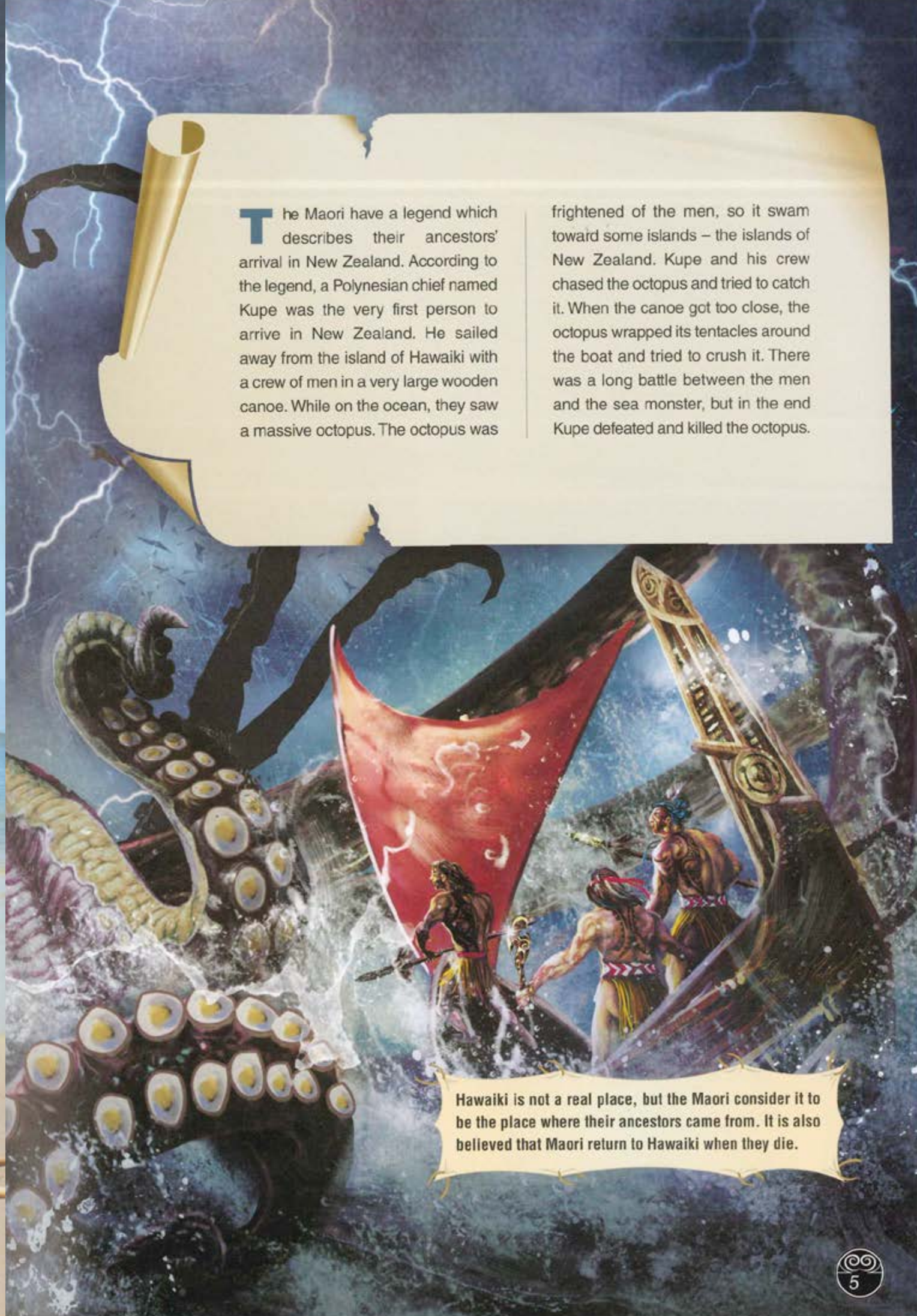
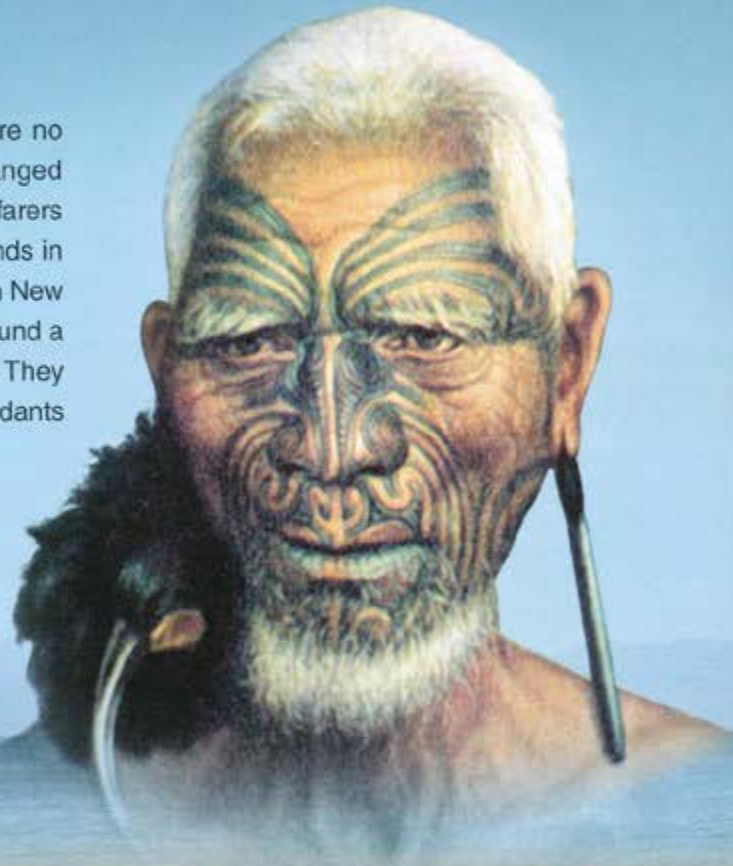
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The Discovery of New Zealand

Until less than a thousand years ago, there were no human inhabitants in New Zealand. That changed sometime between 1150 and 1350 CE. A group of seafarers set out from Polynesia, a collection of over 1,000 islands in the Pacific Ocean, and were the first people to settle in New Zealand. They traveled to the islands in canoes and found a land of mountains, green hills, and beautiful coasts. They established communities and never left. Their descendants still live there today. They are the Maori people.



The Maori have a legend which describes their ancestors' arrival in New Zealand. According to the legend, a Polynesian chief named Kupe was the very first person to arrive in New Zealand. He sailed away from the island of Hawaiki with a crew of men in a very large wooden canoe. While on the ocean, they saw a massive octopus. The octopus was

frightened of the men, so it swam toward some islands – the islands of New Zealand. Kupe and his crew chased the octopus and tried to catch it. When the canoe got too close, the octopus wrapped its tentacles around the boat and tried to crush it. There was a long battle between the men and the sea monster, but in the end Kupe defeated and killed the octopus.

Hawaiki is not a real place, but the Maori consider it to be the place where their ancestors came from. It is also believed that Maori return to Hawaiki when they die.