

Marble War

by Robert Prins

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There were giants living in the land back then.

“Mum, I wanna go play marbles with Raki.”

“Go on then, Moe. Play on the pathway, and don’t go near the beach.”

“Why?”

“Remember what happened to Bruno last week?”

“Huh?”

“Let me remind you. When Bruno stood on the beach, a wave splashed over him and washed his grubby flesh so clean that the sealions dragged him into the sea and ate him up.”

“I won’t go near the beach mum. I don’t want to get clean.” Moe shuddered at the thought.

Raki and Moe began their game of marbles on the pathway. Moe suggested that they play for keeps and Raki agreed.

Moe’s biggest marble was one that Raki had always wanted as an attack marble. Moe also had a marble that was slightly lopsided, making it roll in unpredictable ways. Raki wanted that one too.

And Raki had a marble that Moe particularly wanted. It was a grey coloured marble with dark cracks all over it but it was fast and deadly. Moe was desperate to win that marble for himself.

Eyeing each other up, Raki and Moe set up their battle lines on the pathway. Rolling his first marble, Moe was so close to taking Raki's smallest marble but missed by the breadth of a tree trunk. Raki flicked his fastest marble at Moe's biggest marble, but it stopped short. Moe claimed two of Raki's ordinary marbles using the giant marble and crushed one of Raki's small marbles into the ground. But then Raki played like a pro. Tongue out, squinting through one eye and concentrating hard, he decimated Moe's marble collection. One by one Moe saw Raki take his prized marbles to pile them in a heap beside the path.

Moe had one marble left. He had to win all of Raki's marbles in his last turn. He wiped his nose on the back of his arm then flicked his marble in a line directly toward Raki's fast, grey, cracked marble. He jumped with excitement as the marble shot straight toward its target. But just as it was about to hit, the thump of Moe's jumping made his marble bounce and miss.

Raki made the last easy shot to win the game. Moe felt cheated. He was furious about losing his marbles. In a rage he picked up all the marbles he could reach and threw them as far as he could. If he couldn't have them, no one would.

Raki launched himself at Moe. The boys wrestled and fought, rolling down the hill until all of a sudden they both stopped on the edge of the cliff overlooking the water. Plopped among the sealions on the beach, with waves washing over them, were their marble collections. They would stay on the beach for ever.

There are no giants in the land any more, but the evidence of the marble game gone wrong can still be seen at a place now known as the Moeraki Boulders.

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Playing marbles for keeps can either go well or it can go very, very badly. Find out what happens when Moe loses all his marbles in a single game.

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