

Some Important Scenes & Quotations from *Whale Rider*

1. Pai's Opening Voice-Over

PAI (*narrating*): In the old days the land felt a great emptiness that was waiting, waiting to be filled up, waiting for someone to love her, waiting for a leader. And he came on the back of a whale, a man to lead a new people, our ancestor, Paikea... But now we were waiting for the firstborn of the new generation, for the descendant of the whale rider, for the boy who would be chief... There was no gladness when I was born. My twin brother died and took our mother with him.

2. Pai asks Koro "where we come from"

PAI: Paka, at school we gotta do a speech on where we come from and that... So anyway, you know how we all came on a whale?

KORO: That's right.

PAI: But where does the whale come from?

KORO: From Hawaiiiki.

PAI: Where's that?

KORO: It's where we lived before we came here, where the ancestors are.

PAI: So, Paikea came from there.

KORO: Ae.

PAI: How long ago?

KORO: Long time.

PAI: But how long?

KORO: See that there? (*He shows her the rope for starting the motor.*) Look at it closely. What do you see?

PAI: Lots of little bits of rope all tied together.

KORO: That's right. (*He recites a saying in Maori.*) "Weave together the threads of Paikea so that our line remains strong." Each of those threads is one of your ancestors all joined together and strong all the way back to that whale of yours. (*He pulls the rope to start the boat motor, but the rope breaks.*) Useless bloody rope. I'll get another one. (*Koro walks away to the shed. Pai carefully splices the threads of the rope back together, winds the rope around the starting mechanism again, and pulls the rope. The engine starts, and she revs it.*)

PAI: Paka! Paka! It's working! It's working.

KORO: (*Returns and turns the engine off.*) I don't want you to do that again. It's dangerous.

3. Porourangi argues with Koro, and then tries to comfort his daughter

KORO: You can't wait to get away. I see it in you. You never stay because it hurts you to see what's happening to us.

POROURANGI: Yeah, it does.

KORO: But you still walk away from it. Leave that waka of yours out there to rot.

POROURANGI: I'm not here shoveling shit, but, dad, I'm doing my share. Look, did you even see my work? Did you... did you even look at it?

KORO: You call it work. It's not work; it's souvenirs. Those young men you turn your back on... they've got something to learn from you. You've got something to offer. Don't you turn away! Yeah, you've got the privileges... but you forget you've also got the obligations!

POROURANGI: Look at me, Dad, for once in your life. Go on. Ah, you don't even know who I am.

KORO: I know who you're meant to be, who you were born to be.

POROURANGI: Oh, yeah, right. But I failed you, eh, dad? Yeah, because why? I had a daughter? Well, I'm probably gonna have another daughter.

And you know what? I'm not gonna let you treat another child of mine like that.

KORO: Then take her with you! You don't like the job I'm doing, take her! Go on! Take her!

NANNY: Stop it!

KORO: She's no use to me. *(Pai overhears what Koro says and runs out of the house.)*

NANNY: Pai?

POROURANGI: No, leave her. I'll get her. Pai!

(POROURANGI follows Pai outside to the abandoned waka.)

POROURANGI: You all right? Gotta watch that Koro sometimes. Big mouth of his gets away on him, eh?

PAI: He didn't mean it...about me.

POROURANGI: Well...you know, maybe we should think about it.

PAI: Think about what?

POROURANGI: You coming to live with me for a while. What do you think?

PAI: Why doesn't he want me?

POROURANGI: Oh, Pai, it's not you. It's not even about you, in a way. Koro is just... he's just looking for something that doesn't exist anymore.

PAI: A new leader. They exist.

POROURANGI: Yeah, they do, except I think...it's become even more than that. In his head, your Koro, he needs a prophet.

PAI: What's that?

POROURANGI: Well, somebody who's gonna lead our people out of the darkness...and who'll make everything all right again. Only problem is, you can't just decide who those people are just because you want them to be, eh?

PAI: Like my brother?

POROURANGI: Yeah. Your Koro made himself believe so strongly that he was gonna be the one.

PAI: But what if he was?

POROURANGI: And what if he wasn't? You know, your Koro, he did the same thing with me.

PAI: Is that why he's so hard on you?

POROURANGI: Yep. Pretty much. Because I can't be what he wants, eh?

PAI: Me neither.

4. After sending Pai away, Koro decides to start looking for a new Chief

KORO: I'm gonna need all the firstborn boys. It's time they learned.

NANNY: Learned what?

KORO: When she was born, that's when things went wrong for us. That's where we'll find the answer.

5. Pai confronts Hemi about smoking, and Hemi talks about his dad

PAI: You shouldn't be smoking.

HEMI: Tryin' to give up, aren't I? How come you didn't go with your dad?

PAI: I did.

HEMI: Hmm. For one day. I would have gone. When my dad gets out, I'm gonna go with him.

PAI: Where?

HEMI: Wherever. Get outta this dump.

PAI: Koro's gonna be pissed off when he sees you smoking.

HEMI: No, he won't, 'cause he's not coming.

PAI: Is so.

HEMI: No, he's getting the school ready.

PAI: What school?

HEMI: For us fellas, to teach us the old ways and that.

6. Nanny tells Pai that her uncle, Rawiri, knows some things worth knowing

NANNY: He's got a lot of rules he has to live by.

PAI: It's not fair.

NANNY: I know...but sometimes you've just got to let him think that he's the boss.

PAI: He is the boss.

NANNY: Hmph. Not of me. I let him think he is, though.

PAI: What's wrong with me, nanny?

NANNY: Nothing's wrong with you. You hear me? You got the blood of Muriwai in your veins, girl. Think she'd be proud of you saying things like that? Anyway, that old Paka's not the only one who knows some tricks.

PAI: Eh?

NANNY: Well, you wouldn't know it now, but before he got fat and ugly...your uncle Rawiri was a bit of a hotshot with the taiaha.

PAI: True?

NANNY: Won a trophy and everything. Oh, you should have seen him. He was beautiful.

PAI: What happened?

NANNY: I don't know. He was the second son. But he knows some things, your uncle Rawiri. Don't you worry about that.

7. Hemi's father comes to the *marae* to see his son

KORO: All these ancestors are watching too.

HEMI: This is my dad.

(KORO approaches HEMI'S FATHER, SHAKES HIS HAND)

KORO: Come to see your boy?

HEMI'S FATHER: Yeah.

KORO: Good. Hemi, you first.

(HEMI'S FATHER sits down next to the other men, and they nod in greeting. HEMI recites the chant he was taught by KORO. HEMI'S FATHER smiles with pride.)

(Meanwhile, PAI is walking along the road and practicing the taiaha.)

PAI: Hah! Hah!

(A car comes up alongside PAI and slows down. Rap music can be heard playing inside the car. A male inside the car speaks to her.)

MALE INSIDE THE CAR: Girl! Where's that school?

PAI: Over there.

(The car continues past PAI.)

(Next, HEMI and HEMI'S FATHER are leaving the school. HEMI's expression is one of disappointment. The car that passed PAI is waiting with three men inside, all of them wearing sunglasses and looking rather tough. One of the men is smoking something.)

HEMI: I thought you were gonna stay for the whole thing.

HEMI'S FATHER: Seen your bit, didn't I? Come meet my mates.

MALE INSIDE THE CAR: *(to HEMI'S FATHER)* Hey.

HEMI'S FATHER: Hey. This is my boy.

MALE INSIDE THE CAR: *(to HEMI)* Hey.

HEMI'S FATHER: *(to HEMI)* Say hello.

HEMI: Hello.

HEMI'S FATHER: Better watch out for this one. *(He playfully boxes with Hemi.)* Did all right in there, eh? See you later.

HEMI: Tonight?

HEMI'S FATHER: Next couple of days, maybe. *(He speaks to his "mates.")* We're outta here.

(HEMI, clearly disappointed, watches the car leave. From a distance, PAI watches HEMI. Her expression shows that she is concerned about HEMI.)

(Next, PAI walks around the back of the marae building and sees HEMI sitting there. He is wiping his eyes and is clearly upset about his father.)

HEMI: *(speaking to PAI)* Get lost, you.

PAI: Was that your dad?

HEMI: Get lost.

(HEMI raises his taiaha and charges at PAI, who raises her taiaha in defense. PAI and HEMI spar with the sticks, and their sparring is heard inside, where KORO is. Handling the taiaha skillfully, PAI knocks the taiaha from Hemi's hands, and it falls on the ground as KORO comes around the corner. He picks up the taiaha and glares at PAI.)

KORO: *(to PAI)* What have you done? Answer me.

(PAI does not respond.)

HEMI: It wasn't her fault.

KORO: *(with an expression of disgust on his face)* Go wash your face.

8. Koro confronts Pai after she knocks the *taiaha* from Hemi's hands

KORO: Do you know what you've done?

PAI: No.

KORO: You've broken the *tapu* of this school, on this *marae*, the one place where our old ways are upheld, the knowledge that's been passed down from your ancestors, from my grandfather to me, to those boys, *profati*. It's broken!

PAI: I'm sorry, Paka.

KORO: You're not sorry. Right from the beginning you knew that his wasn't for you, but you keep coming back. Do you want me to fail? You want these boys to fail?

9. Pai asks Nanny, "What if he fails?"

PAI: What if he fails, nanny?

NANNY: Then he fails.

PAI: What will happen to him?

NANNY: Nothing will happen...except me thinking about that divorce.

PAI: It's not Koro's fault, nanny.

NANNY: What's not his fault? Sounds like his fault to me.

PAI: Not that I'm a girl.

10. Koro's Final Test – The *reiputa*

KORO: You've all done very well. You've shown me that you've got courage, that you're strong, and that you can learn. But there can only be one. So there's one final test, a test of your spirit. If you have the tooth of a whale, you must have the whale's jaw to wield it. One of you will bring that back to me.

KORO throws the reiputa (or whale's tooth necklace) overboard. Most of the boys remove their shirts and dive in after it. The twins do not.

ONE OF THE TWINS: Bubba's got a cold, and I can't swim.

RAWIRI: It's all right, man.

11. In the boat with Rawiri, Shilo, and Rawiri's two friends, Pai swims down to find Koro's *reiputa*

PAI: Uncle, is this where Paka lost his *reiputa*?

SHILO: His what?

RAWIRI: That thing he wore around his neck. He threw it overboard.

SHILO: Crazy old Paka.

PAI: Where?

RAWIRI: Just over there.

PAI: I'll get it. *(PAI dives into the water.)*

PAI: *(narrating as she swims downward)* It's quiet down deep. Koro needed quiet. That's what nanny said. He didn't want to talk anymore. He just wanted to go down and down.

12. Pai's Speech at the Concert

PAI: This speech is a token of my deep love and respect...for Koro Apirana, my grandfather... My name is Paikea Apirana... *(PAI begins to weep and struggles to speak.)*

NANNY: Go on, bub.

PAI: And I come from a long line of chiefs, stretching all the way back to Hawaiiiki, where our ancient ones are, the ones that first heard the land crying and sent a man. His name was also Paikea...and I am his most recent descendant. But I was not the leader my grandfather was expecting, and by being born, I broke the line back to the ancient ones. It wasn't anybody's fault. It just happened.

The scene shifts to the beach, where KORO finds a pod of whales have stranded themselves on the sand.

KORO: *(speaking Maori)* Who is to blame?

The scene shifts back to PAI's speech.

PAI: But we can learn. And if the knowledge is given to everyone, we can have lots of leaders. And soon, everyone will be strong...not just the ones that've been chosen. Because sometimes, even if you're the leader and you need to be strong, you can get tired. Like our ancestor, Paikea, when he was lost at sea, and he couldn't find the land, and he probably wanted to die. But he knew the ancient ones were there for him, so he called out to them to lift him up and give him strength. This is his chant. I dedicate it to my grandfather.

13. The community tries to save the beached whales. Koro asks for Rawiri's help but refuses Pai's help. The great whale refuses Koro and the community's help.

PAI: *(narrating)* I called them and they came. But it wasn't right. They were dying.

KORO goes to the largest whale in the pod.

PAI: *(narrating)* Koro knew what it meant. It was Paikea's whale, sent to us because we were in trouble.

KORO stands close to the largest whale in the pod. RAWIRI comes up next to KORO.

RAWIRI: Dad?

KORO: We've got to turn it around.

RAWIRI: How?

KORO: Get a tractor down here and some ropes. We'll wait for the tide. If we can move it, the others will follow. Get the men.

RAWIRI: They're stuffed. Half of them have been up all night.

KORO: They'll do it for you.

RAWIRI goes to get the tractor and a heavy rope to try to turn the largest whale around.

PAI: *(narrating)* It was a test... but for Koro this time.

PAI approaches the whale and is about to touch it, but KORO interrupts her.

KORO: Leave it. You've done enough.

RAWIRI and the rest of the group try to turn the chief whale around with a rope and a tractor. However, the whale seems to refuse their help, shaking its enormous tail against the ocean bottom and apparently resisting the humans' efforts to turn it around.

PAI: (*narrating*) He wanted to die. There wasn't a reason to live anymore.

The rope linking the whale to the tractor breaks.

RAWIRI: It's no use. They're too tired. We'll try again later. Let them rest.

14. Koro at Pai's bedside in the hospital

KORO: Wise leader, forgive me. I am just a fledgling new to flight.

15. The Final *Waka* Sequence

PAI (*Voice Over*): My name is Paikea Apirana, and I come from a long line of chiefs stretching all the way back to the Whale Rider. I'm not a prophet, but I know that our people will keep going forward all together, with all of our strength.