

Pania of the reef

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Still and silent stream in the midnight dark Resting amongst the flax is the night sky beauty herself
Quenching a thirst from the sweet, still waters Winds that whisper vows and carry the faintest of
spells Her eyes are deep pools of wintery water Playing in the shallows feels safe, any deeper and
you risk drowning An otherworldly beauty emerges from her secret stream Such an ethereal maiden
has never before been seen Rushing to a union and pledging to love Karitioki and Pania , under the
thick of night, retire to bliss Sirens of the sea call her name at first light Until tomorrow she bids and
returns to her watery world Boasts to everyone of a beautiful wife Yet none can lay eyes on this
seashore seductress Kaumatua has the answer that is so sought To keep the beautiful maiden's feet
on dry land Cooked food is the answer for Chief Karitioki Sleeping softly, blissful and in peace One
delicate morsel is enough to keep Ruru calls a warning, no longer does Pania sleep Sirens of the sea
beseech her return Fleeing on fast feet, Pania rushes to the shore She is snatched into the depths of
reefs below Stormy waters bellow on the surface The alarmed Karitioki follows on behind Frantically
swimming to try and save his love A mistake to think he could keep her on land Now the maiden of
the sea resides in the reefs Author's note: This poem is based on the tale of Pania of the reef from
New Zealand Maori mythology. Karitioki is the name of the Maori Chief who fell in love with Pania;
Kaumatua is the Maori word for elder, someone who is wise and sage. Ruru is the Maori word for the
Morepork Owl.

