

Scene 1

(To intro music (cd track 7) the cast enters. Groups of men, women and children are seen working, cooking, weaving, practising poi dances and stick games etc – see staging suggestions. A narrator stands to the side holding an old looking manuscript from which s/he will read.)

Song – Too Short Were The days (cd track 8) (Whole cast)

Verse 1 Listen to our story told from ages past,
Of how the sun moved across the sky too fast.
The people were unhappy and frustrated too,
They could not finish what they had begun to do.

Chorus Too short were the days, too long were the nights.
Too few were the hours of daylight.
The sun moved too fast across the sky,
Too quickly the daylight hours passed by.

Verse 2 Maui was a hero so the legends told,
For he had great powers, he was strong and bold.
He thought upon a plan to make the sun go slow,
And so we have our story told from long ago.

Chorus Too short were the days.....

Repeat Too short were the days.....

Narrator ~ In the beginning of time in the land of Aotearoa, the sun travelled quickly across the sky. The days were too short and the nights were too long. There was very little time for the people to complete their tasks. The men needed more time to hunt and fish. The women wove flax mats and baskets and worked in the kumara gardens, but they could never finish their work. The children liked to dance, practise stick games and play, but it quickly became too dark for them to see. When they had prepared their meals, the sun would go down and they would have to eat in darkness. The people became unhappy and they grumbled about the days being too short.

(To intro music (cd track 9) the working, poi dancing, stick games etc continue. Gradually dim the lights and fade the music. Sticks are dropped, pois are tangled and work ceases to the frustration of all.)

Child 1 ~ (*practising stick games*) Oh, it’s happened again! The sun’s gone down and we can’t see what we’re doing!

Child 2 ~ I keep dropping my sticks! We can’t practise in the dark!

Children ~ (*grizzling*) There’s never any time to play.

Woman 1 ~ (*weaving*) It’s always the same. Rush, rush, rush to get anything done before the sun goes down!

Woman 2 ~ (*weaving*) We can’t keep up with our work. I’m only half way through weaving this mat. (*holding up unfinished mat*) and now I can’t see to finish it. I keep making mistakes!

Woman 1 ~ Last week I was in the bush collecting berries in my flax basket. Before I knew it, the sun went down and I couldn’t see to find my way back home. I tripped over tree roots, dropped the basket and lost all the berries.

(*Everyone complains together with comments like ‘The sun goes too fast!’*)

Woman 3 ~ We’ll have to eat in darkness again!

Woman 4 ~ That’s right. We can’t even see our food!

Woman 3 ~ We can’t see what we’re eating and we can’t see who we’re eating with! Just last night, I sat down to eat with my husband, but it wasn’t my husband at all! It was the wrong man!

(*The women laugh at her.*)

Woman 5 ~ That’s because it was my husband!

Woman 3 ~ I hate having to eat in the dark.

Child 3 ~ (*to friend*) At least I can leave my vegetables and my mum won’t know!

Child 4 ~ And I can sneak some extra meat off my dad’s plate.

Woman 3 ~ (*standing up, moving off stage*) Come on everyone. Let’s go.

(*To intro music (cd track 10) bring the lights down to signal the end of the day.
Fade the music and bring the lights back up to signal a new day.*)

Man 1 ~ What can we do? Something must be done to make our days longer. We cannot live like this.

(The villagers shrug shoulders, shake their heads and look towards sky.)

Song – Slow Down Sun (cd track 11)
(Whole cast)

Chorus Slow down sun, slow down sun,
(All) We cannot get our work done.
 Too quickly the days go past,
 The hours of daylight do not last.

Verse 1 There is no time for working, no time for hunting too.
(Men) There is no time for fishing, when we’re out in our canoe.

Chorus Slow down sun.....

Verse 2 There is no time for weaving, no time for gardening too.
(Women) There is no time for cooking, hours of daylight are too few.

Chorus Slow down sun.....

Verse 3 There is no time for dancing, no time for playing too.
(Children) There is no time for doing all the things we like to do.

Chorus Slow down sun.....

Village Elder ~ *(stepping forward and speaking with authority)* Perhaps Maui can help us. Where is he?

Man 2 ~ He’s in the forest hunting. I’ll go and find him. *(He exits.)*

Village Elder ~ *(slowly and thoughtfully)* If anyone can come up with an idea, Maui can. He has achieved many great things that have seemed impossible.

(Maui enters, carrying hunting gear, amongst which is his enchanted whale jawbone.)

Village Elder ~ *(calling Maui over to him)* Ah, Maui. Can you help us? You have been blessed with great wisdom and special powers. What can we do to lengthen our days? They are too short and the nights are too long. It’s so frustrating for all of us.

Maui ~ You are right. It’s frustrating for me too. Just last night I was out fishing in the canoe. I had a big bite, I started to haul it in and it was a whopper! *(He shows exaggerated size with arm movements.)* I was just taking it off the hook when the sun went down. The fish slipped out of my hands and got away! I had to paddle the canoe back to land and drag it onto the beach in darkness. *(looking up to the sky and shaking his fist)* Something must be done! The sun races across the sky far too quickly. *(pausing)* With my magic jawbone and with your help, I think we can succeed in making the days longer.

(He beckons to his brothers and they stand together in a huddle as Maui explains his plan.)

Narrator ~ Maui called his brothers together and told them of his plan. They would travel to the edge of the world to catch the sun in a snare made from flax ropes.

Taha ~ *(stepping back in horror)* Catch the sun? Maui, you’ve come up with some good ideas before, but catching the sun? The heat and flames will burn us!

Roto ~ It’s way too dangerous. The ropes will burn. They’ll shrivel up in the heat.

Waho ~ You mean we’ll shrivel up in the heat!

Pae ~ No one can get near the sun. It’s impossible. He is far too hot and fierce.

Waho ~ Besides, I don’t want to singe my hair.

Maui ~ Haven’t you seen the things I have done already? I know we can do this but I can’t do it alone. I need your help. *(turning to the women)* And I’ll need your help too. We will need some long and strong ropes woven with flax so that we can make a snare.

(Maui and his brothers exit.)

Narrator ~ The women of the village gathered the flax from the nearby bushes. They worked hard day in and day out, skilfully weaving the long ropes.

.....continued.....