

# Afakasi Woman

by Lani Wendt Young

## About the author:

Lani Wendt Young is a Samoan author and columnist. In 2018, she was named the ACP Pacific Laureate, selected by the African, Caribbean, Pacific Group of States as they paid tribute to her 'creativity, courage and entrepreneurship'. The ACP acknowledged her fiction writing, utilizing of digital publishing to take Samoan stories to a global audience, and also her journalism.

She's the author of ten books including the international bestselling Young Adult TELESA series, also published by OneTree House. She's worked as a scriptwriter for Disney, and her stories for children are published by the NZ School Journal.

She delivered the 2019 NZ Book Council Lecture, was the 2018 recipient of the Douglas Gabb Australia-Pacific Journalism internship and in 2017 her reporting on climate change issues in the Pacific won her a coveted fellowship award covering the UN Climate Conference in Bonn, Germany. In 2012 she won the USP Press Prize with an earlier version of this collection of short fiction, Afakasi Woman.

Lani writes columns about feminism, religion, culture, parenting, LGBTI in Pasifika, climate justice and everything in between. Her essay on A Samoan Woman's Perspective on Ordain Women features in the Oxford Univ Press 2015 collection Mormon Feminism: Essential Writings. Her writing on child sexual abuse and domestic violence in Pasifika communities has generated dialogue in many forums worldwide.

## Synopsis of Novel:

An 'afakasi woman' is a woman of mixed heritage: Samoan and New Zealand 'palagi', Samoan and Maori. Lani Wendt Young presents a series of short stories from the viewpoints of these women and girls living in Samoa. Funny, sad, uplifting and sometimes deeply uncomfortable but illuminating, this is a collection of cultural understanding with women at its heart.

## Themes / issues:

Samoan protocol, religion, romance, pride, betrayal, suicide, finding courage, high school, the importance of family, identity, culture clash, Pasifika mythology, finding one's place in the world, resilience, revenge.

## Year level suitability and application

Y9 or up to Y12 would be the most appropriate with regard to the content depending on the story. The language and imagery is rich and varied and some could be quite challenging especially to English second language students. However, reading and studying the stories would be a fantastic opportunity to develop students' vocabulary range (and why vocab activities are included in this resource).

The text also lends itself naturally to exemplar and tasks for creative writing work especially around describing a person or a place. Much of the study guide is intended for post reading although you may choose to work through some of the activities (especially the vocab and writing activities) as your students are reading.

At the end of this guide are suggestions for connected texts (with links), and answers to some of the tasks.



## For the student

In English, we take time to look much closer at texts which is why we say we are going to 'study a story'. This means to read, to think about, to analyse (to work out how and why a text is constructed) the story so that we have a better understanding of it and its message and to take the time to communicate that understanding in different ways: writing, speaking, creating something visual etc.

These elements of the short story are the ones we are to study:

- Style (the WAY the story is written)
- Character (the people of the story)
- Structure (the way and order key EVENTS are presented)
- Setting (WHEN and WHERE the action takes place)
- Theme (messages/lessons learned as a result of reading the text)

## Learning opportunities

### For each story

#### 1. similar/immediate task

- a) Read the story
- b) Write down your first impression of the story.
- c) Re-read the story, this time noting anything new you notice. Any questions? Things you don't understand.
- d) Write down what you learn because of this second reading.

2. Answer five comprehension questions designed to check for level of understanding.

3. Do the activity.

4. Focus on a feature activity (either character, style (including vocab), setting, structure, theme).

5. Include a written and visual activity.

At the end, generalised activities which allow students to hone in on one or two stories – this is where essay writing and close reading analysis of language will be included using one story 'The Red Hibiscus' as an example.

### The stories in brief

(with a specific activity and some comprehension questions to go with them).

Explanation of these comprehension questions for each story:

- Question 1 is a Level One question: Literal meanings or 'On the Surface' statements. The information can easily be found in the text.
- Question 2 is a Level Two: Interpretation of the Level One statements or 'Between the Lines.' You say what you think the writer means using your understanding of the information provided.

- Question 3 is a Level Three: Application of the ideas by 'Going Beyond the Lines.' You make judgements based on the information in the text and your own interpretations.

#### Tasi pg 5

Her grandmother had palagi aspirations, but her mother chose love in Samoa.

- 1) Who is the woman in the photo?
- 2) Why did Nana send Tasi's mother her to all those classes?
- 3) What ethnicity is Tasi's mother and why do you think it matters to Nana that she didn't marry a palagi farmer?

Activity: Create collage of the things her Nana valued, and beside it things that Tasi values.

#### Lua pg 7

Auntie's skilfully humble oratory wins in the face of mockery and dignity is restored.

- 1) What is an ie toga?
- 2) Why are the women of the Komitee making fun of Lua and the food?
- 3) Why is it important to feed visitors in Samoa, and what do you think Auntie really meant in her speech to the women?

Activity: Find a recipe for Puligi- Samoan Pudding. Try making and sharing it with your family.

#### Tolu pg 10

Enjoying mythology and fairy-tales from both worlds and winning in the tooth game.

- 1) Why do you throw a tooth to a rat in Samoa?
- 2) Who was the real tooth fairy in this story?
- 3) What do you think Tolu really believes, and why does that make her happy?

Activity: Draw a simple cartoon (stick figures are fine!) showing the Isumu rat and a tooth fairy meeting over the tooth. What would they say to each other?

#### Fā pg 12

Sisters with a palagi mother feel deep discomfort when taken to a support group for women married to Samoans.

- 1) What kind of cakes are at this party?
- 2) Why do all the women need a support group?
- 3) Fā feels sorry for her father who doesn't have a support group. Explain why she might feel this way.

Activity: Write a list of all the complaints the women have. Beside each one, write how they might solve those issues.

## Lima pg 16

Shared corporal punishment at school from an angry teacher becomes a means to belong.

- 1) What is Lima's friend's name?
- 2) Why don't afakasi kids get hit by teachers?
- 3) How does Lima feel when she gets hit? Why wouldn't she complain to her parents?

Activity: Michel Mulipola is a Samoan cartoonist <https://www.bloodysamoan.com/>. Draw a caricature of Miss Teulia in his style, waving her stick.

## Ono pg 19

A family judges looks by depth of colour and the trade-off for a palagi mother.

- 1) How did Fiti's mother Mabel and Ono's uncle meet?
- 2) Why does Fiti have to stay out of the sun so much?
- 3) Why does Ono's mother help out so much with food and in the kitchen, when Mable doesn't?

Activity: Find or draw a picture of a sunhat you think Fiti could wear. What is it made of?

## Fitu pg 21

Class division; the many kinds of afakasi judged by heritage, reputation, education and money.

- 1) What did Fitu's grandfather do for a job?
- 2) How many kinds of afakasi are there and what makes them different from each other?
- 3) Why doesn't Fitu's mother seem to value education over money and why might her not being Samoan contribute to this?

Activity: Make a prize certificate for Fitu. You can do this in any medium you like. Pay special attention to what you think she should be awarded for and why.

## Valu pg 25

Her father cares about family equality, but not as much as he cares about public shame.

- 1) Why doesn't Valu's father make her turn off the light?
- 2) Does her father mind doing the dishes?
- 3) Why would people have a bad opinion of Valu if they knew her father washed the dishes for the family?

Activity: Do the evening dishes for your family, unasked, no complaints for a week. Write about the experience and what the family said when you took it on. What did you feel by the end of the week?

## Iva pg 27

A trip to meet the New Zealand part of the family, has their Māori mother worried about being good enough.

- 1) Where are Iva's family going and why?
- 2) How does her mother want them to behave? Give examples.
- 3) Why is her mother getting so stressed about the trip and what do you think will happen if her Samoan family don't behave as she wants them to.

Activity: Design a briefcase for Iva's father that he would prefer. Think of what would go in the pockets that are necessary for him.

OR

Design a dress you would wear arriving in New Zealand, that is reflective of Samoan values and doesn't make you look like a Von Trapp Family singer from The Sound of Music.

## The Beast that Came from the Sea pg 33

When the Earthquake God Mafui'e shakes, a sudden tsunami devours her family and the grief and loss haunts Ame for life.

- 1) What were Ame and her family doing when the earthquake hit?
- 2) What is the 'beast' and what did it do?
- 3) What feelings would Ame be left with, and why is it that only baby Mose calls to her?

Activity: Group activity: here is a great video of a Tsunami simulation and its effect on a small village. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZZFPCY6RIE>

Make one and film your result. How long do you think you would have to get to safety?

## A Real Samoan Woman pg 37

Mele finds that sharing absolutely everything with an extended family is her uncomfortable experience of real Samoan identity.

- 1) Where was Mele born and raised?
- 2) Why didn't she feel like a 'real' Samoan woman growing up?
- 3) What made Mele leave Samoa? In your opinion, was she justified, or should she have stayed?

Activity: Mele wore coconut jewellery to proclaim her identity. Find a picture of a piece of jewellery that identifies you. Explain why.

## Again pg 49

Marisa turns a deaf ear to the irritating and contradictory sounds of children being beaten and loud hymns being sung next door.

- 1) What activity is Marisa doing on Monday afternoon?
- 2) What is White Sunday and why is it important?

3) Why doesn't Marisa intervene when she knows children are being beaten? How do you think she feels about the violence and who does she really blame?

Activity: Find recordings of Ave Maria and a Samoan hymn. Play them both, loudly. Which do you prefer? What message are they both trying to deliver?

### **Sina the Snake Killer pg 55**

A subdued and phobic woman mocked by her husband and family, finds the courage to kill her fears and stand up for herself.

- 1) Where is Sina and her family from?
- 2) We read that she was educated, so why does she allow her husband and his family to mock her?
- 3) When Sina killed the snake, what or who do you think that snake represented? What did she gain from killing it?

Activity: Make a snake from paper, colour it in. Here is an easy free template to use: <https://www.firstpalette.com/printable/spiral-snake.html>

Write on the back of it what your biggest fear or worry is. Be Sina and 'kill' that paper snake.

### **Don't Tell pg 77**

Sexually abused by her stepfather, Susanna does the right thing and tells. The consequences for her through a legal win make her even a more of a victim and leaves her with one sad piece of advice.

- 1) Who was Susanna's best friend at school?
- 2) What happened when she told her teacher Mrs Esera?
- 3) What do you think about the justice that Susanna got from a) the legal system and b) her family?

Activity: Write a letter to Susanna. What would you say to her? What advice would you give her?

### **The Coconut Seller pg 87**

A small raggedy boy selling coconuts tugs at the heartstrings of a mother buying food, but her assumptions about his family situation turn out to be quite different.

- 1) What were the three children in the car eating?
- 2) Who was the boy selling coconuts for? What do you think their relationship is?
- 3) How do you think the woman in the car feels when she sees him selling more coconuts? What thoughts would be going through her head?

Activity: Find out how much coconuts are to buy in New Zealand. Work out how many would equal the cost of a takeout dinner for a family of five from McDonalds.

### **We Love the Samoan People! Pg 93**

A very funny and uncomfortable story about hospitable politeness with laughter behind the backs of culturally unaware enthusiastic (and unwashed) tourists.

- 1) What is the name of the café in Samoa that serves \$8 coffees?
- 2) Why does Kisa use broken English around the backpackers?
- 3) What do you think the backpackers should have been more aware of in Samoa and why do you think they weren't?

Activity: Re-enact the scene where the backpacker's lavalava falls with Kisa and Mata's reaction. Note- wear shorts underneath!

### **A Sister's Story pg 101**

Loma struggles with the tragic suicide of her twin sister Italia, the grief of separation to a place she cannot follow. A heart wrenching story exploring feelings of betrayal and seeking of forgiveness.

- 1) What was Italia going to be when she left school?
- 2) How did their mother die and why did Italia kill herself?
- 3) Why do you think Loma felt betrayed by her sister? Ultimately, what or who is responsible for Italia taking her own life?

Activity: imagine you are a twin and your sister/brother has done something that puts them in some kind of danger. Draw a list of the pros and cons of telling an adult. What would you decide to do and why?

### **When a Palagi Wants to Date a Samoan Woman pg 115**

Rules for dating which include not dating, exchanging glances at church, feeding all of her family and never, ever touching.

- 1) What can't a Samoan woman openly say?
- 2) As a man, what must you do to impress her family?
- 3) Why do you think these unofficial rules are in place? And what will they think of you if you break them?

Activity: Imagine you are about to visit the family of a Samoan girl you like. Write a check list of everything you must take with you and rules you need to keep in mind.

### **Remember Me pg 123**

'Poto' grieves for her fierce little Auntie Mele and the tame pig, Billy Boy, who is to feed the crowd of mourners.

- 1) What is on the table next to Auntie Mele's casket?
- 2) What does Auntie Mele want for her niece?
- 3) Why is Poto so upset about Billy Boy the pig? Do you think Auntie Mele would have been to, and why?

Activity: Write about the death of Auntie Mele from Billy Boy's perspective.

### Stone-throwing Assassins pg 133

Uncle Savelio lays out the rules for stealthy combat in a top-secret family meeting.

- 1) What got thrown at Mikakolio's house?
- 2) How did Uncle Savelio react when people confessed?
- 3) If the meeting was top secret, why did Uncle use a microphone so everyone in the village could hear the family discussion?

Activity: Draw a tee shirt logo design for Uncle Savelio's Ninjas. Keep it simple using three colours.

### Moana's Tears pg 139

European practices of isolation for leprosy are at conflict with Samoan family values.

- 1) What were Moana and Timu doing when they saw the ship?
- 2) Why was the ship in the Apia Harbour? What was its purpose?
- 3) Why did Moana's family keep her mother hidden in the house and why were they so upset when the doctors came?

### Still born pg 149

Luana's journey through a difficult early pregnancy ends in still birth. Feelings of guilt, the pain of loss, mother love and acceptance are explored with honesty.

- 1) What does Luana's daughter, Mele, want to call the baby?
- 2) What are Luana's fears throughout the stages of the pregnancy?
- 3) How do you think she feels about other people's reactions to the news of the still birth. Why might they react in that way?

Activity: Try writing a sympathy letter to Luana about her loss. What would you say?

### Red Hibiscus – A Fairy Tale pg 165.

1. What is 'Māmā's occupation?
2. Why doesn't Masina want to go back to Pastor's class?
3. What happens to the pastor? Why do you think the village women provide a different reason to the police?

Activity: create a 'Snakes and Ladder' board game set in Masina's village. Think about which squares you would make the snakes head and which you would include the start of the ladder. Think about key plot points and the characters – whether they are a help or a hindrance.

### High School is a Jungle pg 179

Channelling Lara Croft, an English teacher heads into the wilds of a new High School to assert dominance and live to teach another day. The start of this story cleverly subverts the readers expectations.

- 1) Which shoes does 'Miss' decide to wear on the first day and why?
- 2) Who does she live with and what is he like?
- 3) Why is she so nervous about the impression she creates throughout the day and why might that impact her future at the school?

Activity: If you were facing a new situation where you had to appear confident what film character would you take on and why?

## Extended Lesson Plan

### Red Hibiscus – A Fairy Tale pg 165.

(This structure can be applied to one or more pieces of writing as time allows.)

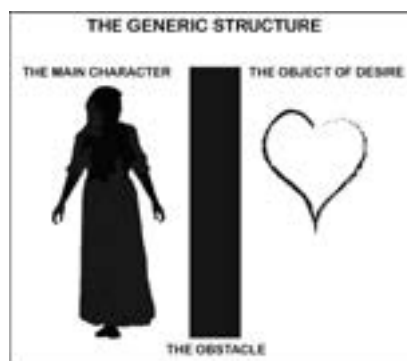
#### A: Close up on Character

##### Main Character:

Short stories don't have the space to develop characters so we usually only get to know one character but not all the details about that character. The author selects the information to show us as it relates to the action of the story and/or the message being conveyed. Despite this, we are often shown what they want, what they think, their hopes and dreams. We, the reader, sympathise with this character. We learn what they learn (or what they fail to learn).

Known as the 'Protagonist' or the 'Hero' (but can be an anti-hero). When considering the characters in a story, keep in mind the information in the two diagrams below:

DIAGRAM A: Character's 'object of desire' (also known as the GOAL) blocked by 'obstacles'.



A character's attempts to overcome the obstacle(s) in the story help them to learn, grow, change and, through their experiences, we, the reader also learn important ideas (themes)

DIAGRAM B: What a character wants conflicts with their needs.

What a character  
thinks they...

WANT (plot)

\_\_\_\_\_ is in direct conflict with what they \_\_\_\_\_

NEED (story)

### 1. Do a character study of (example) Red Hibiscus by completing the following tasks:

- Describe Masina's personality. What you think she looks like. To help you, you could cut out from a magazine or find pictures online of a film or tv character that you think is most her but do say why you have chosen the picture.
- Identify her goals/objects of desire. In other words, what is that she wants at the start of the story?
- List the problem(s)/obstacle(s)/people who/that get in the way.
- Write down two or three things that Masina does to try to overcome the obstacle and/or obtain her goal(s).
- Choose ONE of the quotes below and explain what the character means and what YOU think about what they say:

"Maybe Bathsheba didn't know King David was watching? Maybe she was just having a bath? Why didn't King David just look away?"

"My grandmother is waiting," Masina said again. A flock of starlings fluttered wildly in her chest. Fly away, fly away.

"I don't want to go to Aoga Faifeau anymore," said Masina. She wept over the weeds and her tears soaked into the brown earth.

### Minor Characters:

Two or three minor characters are used to help us understand the main character (s). We know their names, and personalities and they have an impact on the main character (either positive or negative). Often they are part of the obstacle or cause conflict for the main character.

### 2. From the list below, choose ONE of the minor characters:

The Pastor

The Pastor's Wife

- Describe what they are like.
- Explain why they are important to the story.

### Flat characters – two dimensional.

Mostly only serve as a plot device/ to further the action of the story or to provide something necessary for the main character's storyline.

In Red Hibiscus the flat characters are the villagers. What purpose do they serve for the story?

### 3. Read the character descriptions below and do the tasks which follow:

"Lefaga had many faces. That day she wore the face she showed most often to the villagers who came to her for medicine and guidance. A wrinkled, worn face like very old siapo. The kind that has many stories. With her thick grey hair twisted into a bun and her slight frame lost in the billow of a faded mu'umu'u, Lefaga's face was every man's ancient grandmother. Every woman's aged great-auntie. Weary, wise, and weak in body."

"Lefaga wore her fierce face. The one that always made Masina think of a grey owl. Feathered features, with black orbs for her eyes. Black-red lips and teeth sharp as shark tips. The skin of her face, neck and torso stamped with the tattoos of women. Talon fingernails. Dark feathers sprouted along the line of her arms and legs. Unmistakable strength, muscle and sinew."

- Find one example of each of the following language techniques:

i. simile

ii. listing

iii. metaphor

iv. alliteration

v. imagery

- Using the descriptions above, draw a picture of the two faces of Lefaga.

- Using the description above as a template (a step by step guide of how to do something), write a description of someone you know well. Aim to mimic the sentence structure, and the language features. Proof read carefully for accuracy.

### 4. Choose one of the essay topics below and write a character essay of about 300 words:

- Describe an important relationship in the story and explain the importance of what we, the reader learns from this relationship.
- Describe an important decision a character must make in the story and explain the importance of what we, the reader learns about the character.
- Describe how a character changes in the story and explain why this change is important.
- Describe one important character and explain what important lesson the reader learns from this character.

### B: Close up on Style

The way a story is told is called 'narrative voice' or 'point of view narration'. The main ones writers use are:

- First person – using 'I' or 'me' for example in the novels The Hunger Games, The Fault in Our Stars and To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee and the short story 'A Game of Cards' by Witi Ihimaera.
- Third person limited – he or she but the view is limited to one or two characters. 'The Doll's House' by Katherine Mansfield and Ender's Game, The Giver and The Harry Potter novels are written this way.

• Third person omniscient (or eye of God) such as Charlotte's Web by EB White, Pride and Prejudice, and Lord of the Flies

• There is also a rarely used 'second person' narrative voice. The short story 'Like Wallpaper' by Carl Nixon and the novel 'Bright Lights, Big City' by Jay McInerney uses this type of narration.

### 1. Red Hibiscus is written in third person limited.

a) What are some advantages of using third person narration?

b) What are some disadvantages of using third person?

c) Which narrative point of view do you prefer? Why?

### 2. Read the extract and do the task which follows:

'A laugh. Like water. The sinuous lazy curve of it as it flowed to the sea. The cool promise of it as it glistened through the trees. The exhilarating rush of it as it tumbled over a cliff side. "Come to me," she said.

The pastor was entranced. He walked farther into the forest, clambering over fallen trees and pushing aside low-lying branches and vines. Insects buzzed around him but he ignored their bite. Sweat soaked his white shirt and it stuck to his skin but he didn't care. He caught a glimpse of the woman now, as she darted ahead of him through the trees. Turning back to cast him a smile. She had long brown hair to her waist, a red flower tucked behind her ear. She wore only a piece of cloth tied around her waist and the bare skin of her breasts gleamed with oil in the sunlight. The pastor was shocked. And excited. "Wait! I just want to talk to you," he called after her. He was breathing deeply now. Hungry eels in pursuit.

The woman paused, let him draw closer. So close he could see the bone carving she wore on a sinnet cord around her neck. The tualima tattoo on her left hand. So close he could smell her perfume as it carried on the breeze. White gardenia and a hint of rain. But before he could catch her, she slipped away again, her elusive laugh lingering in the trees.

Again the faifeau followed. Determined. Until finally he came to a clearing in the deep forest. A pool of fresh spring water ringed with gleaming black rocks. The woman stood at its center with her back to him, washing her long dark hair in the silver coolness. Droplets of water on brown skin. She looked over her shoulder to where the faifeau stood, chest heaving and out of breath with the exertion of his pursuit. A secret smile as she beckoned to him. "Come..."

He didn't hesitate. His footsteps in the water disturbed a sleeping eel. It flicked its tail in annoyance, a sinuous writhing amidst the rocks. But the faifeau only had eyes for the woman who smiled and waited for him at the center of the pool.

He did not hear the rustle of many wings in the trees. Or the rasping call of the lulu.'

From the list of language features below, label each phrase:

alliteration | alliteration | simile | symbolism | simile | metaphor

a) A secret smile as she beckoned to him

b) A laugh. Like water.

c) her elusive laugh lingering in the trees.

d) He was breathing deeply now. Hungry eels in pursuit.

e) The cool promise of it as it glistened through the trees.

f) Sweat soaked his white shirt

### 3. Extension task: Choose one of the following moments in the story and re-write from the point of view of Lefaga:

a) The pastor wasn't happy as Masina sidled towards the door. He walked fast to block Masina's path, pulled her to him.

b) Masina went and sat beside her grandmother and started weeding. And as she tugged at green shoots, feeling the comfort of the dirt beneath her fingers, she told Lefaga everything.

### 4. Tense:

Most stories are written in PAST tense. That is, the action has already happened and the narrator is telling us about the events which are completed. There might be some reflection and evaluation and commentary on the action by the narrator.

Red Hibiscus is written in PAST tense. What is one advantage of using past tense?

a) What is one disadvantage of using past tense?

b) Which do you prefer? Why?

### 5. Choose TWO of the examples a) – e) below and explain the meaning and effect. For example:

There was only unyielding river rock in her voice. Nothing soft.

Meaning: her voice was hard and strong

Effect: the reader is able to hear the tone of voice and her demand for the truth.

a) It was getting late, the sun already sinking to sleep at the edge of the sky

b) The girls spent most of their time at Aoga Faifeau trying to evade hungry eels.

c) "One day you will be one of us. And you will grow a garden of your own."

d) "See, even from putrid filth, we can make beauty."

e) Masina wore the new red hibiscus in her hair. And a smile.

## 6. Extension Activity: What happened next?

Choose one of the following writing tasks:

- Write an epilogue to the story: it is five years later. Masina and Lefaga tend their garden when a policeman come to call.
- Imagine you are Lefaga: write a letter to the pastor's wife, expressing 'sincere' condolences for her lost husband.
- Imagine it is many, many years later and Masina is the village taulaseā, and she is aware of a new 'eel' in the neighborhood.

### D: Closer look at Setting

Lani Wendt Young has set all of these stories in Samoa. Some are in towns, others in villages, some in the past and some in the present.

- Look at a detailed map of Samoa and do a google search using key words and see if you can guess where each story might be set. Think about proximity to the sea, jungle, towns, cities, airports and outlying islands.

Here is a link: <http://ontheworldmap.com/samoa/large-detailed-map-of-samoa.jpg>

Justify your choices of location with descriptions from the text and your research.

For example: Red Hibiscus

'Again the faifeau followed. Determined. Until finally he came to a clearing in the deep forest. A pool of fresh spring water ringed with gleaming black rocks.'

Masina and her grandmother live in a small village with a church and within reach of a spring fed pool.

Samauga is a village on the central north coast of Savai'i island in Samoa. The village population is about 330 (2006).[2] There is a primary school, a church and several small local stores with the main road passing through the village. At the east end is the village of Safotu and on the west side, the road heads towards Lefagaoali'i and Safune. At the base of the cliffs at the east end of the village, and by the sea, are freshwater springs used by the people of Lefagaoali'i and neighbouring villages.

A key project has been to phase out the use of pesticides while diversifying crops for organic gardening and traditional medicinal plants

- Either from what you already know, or find out or from reading the stories, fill in the chart below;

Aspect of life	Samoa	America and/or Aotearoa New Zealand
School		
Religion		
Role of women		
The environment		
Economy		

- What aspects of human behaviour are the same in both societies? Why do you think this is so?

- Choose one aspect of life and compare the two countries. Which, in your opinion, is better? Why?

- Read an extract (Red Hibiscus as an example) and do the tasks which follow:

'After class, the pastor told Masina to stay behind. So he could better explain the story of Bathsheba and David. Millipedes crawled on Masina's skin at the thought of being alone with the pastor.

"I'm sorry, Pastor. I have to hurry home to my grandmother. She's waiting for me."

The pastor wasn't happy as Masina sidled towards the door. He walked fast to block Masina's path, pulled her to him. "My grandmother is waiting," Masina said again. A flock of starlings fluttered wildly in her chest. Fly away, fly away.

"All right," said the pastor. "You go home today. But you tell your grandmother that I need you to stay behind tomorrow. Or else you will be in big trouble. Don't worry. You will like what I have for you. See?"

Eels pushed at her as she struggled to break free. Snapped their teeth at her as she ran out of the room.'

- In one or two sentences, describe where Masina is and what is happening.
- What does Masina think about the pastor? Provide an example to support your point.

All pieces of writing have an overall tone which falls firstly into the broad category of positive or negative. Basically, if there are more positive than negative words, it is a positive piece.

- Re-read the passage . Do you think this has a positive or negative tone?

- Highlight the words in the below list that are used in the extract that help contribute to the overall positive or negative tone of the piece.

pastor | millipedes | grandmother | snapped | trouble | worry

starlings | crawled | eels | fly | teeth | sidled | path | struggled

fluttered

By choosing these specific words, Lani Wendt Young makes us feel like we are experiencing the fear and unease at being alone with the predatory pastor.

- Extension 1: Take 8-10 of the author's words and write a short paragraph describing a time that you experienced a place where you felt deeply uncomfortable and a sense of foreboding.

- Extension 2: Reading Comprehension:

Read the extract below and then do the activities.

'The next morning, an eager green shoot had already pushed its way up to the sunlight. By evening it was the beginning of a hibiscus bush. A special kind of hibiscus found nowhere else in the world. Lefaga watered



it generously with cool water carried from the nearby river. Admired the sheen of its leaves and speculated on the new flower buds. "I wonder what colour we will have?"

By the third day, the hibiscus plant had fully arisen in all its glory. It stood taller than both of them, proudly adorned with flowers as big as a handspan across. But it was the colour which truly caught your eye. A deep abiding red, that tapered to an exuberant pink at the centre, with whisper-spirals of black on each petal.

i) research the hibiscus plant and where it is commonly found in the world. How many varieties are there?

ii) What name would you give to the new hibiscus variety grown by Lefaga?

iii) Create a tattoo design using the flower that incorporates traditional Samoan motifs and one other symbolic image from the story.

### **E: Theme: a closer look at the call to action**

The main message the author wants us to learn about a topic and (usually) a 'call to action' of some sort as a result of learning the lesson.

Below are some other key ideas (themes) explored in the stories. It is through the action and interaction of the main character that we are challenged to think about these ideas.

Samoan protocol, religion, romance, pride, betrayal, suicide, finding courage, high school, the importance of family, identity, culture clash, Pasifika mythology, finding one's place in the world, resilience, revenge.

Choose TWO of the above and write short paragraphs using the structure given below:

1. Topic Sentence: (this is where you write in one of the themes)
2. Evidence: (from the story and try to also include a direct quote)
3. Explanation: (explain the meaning of the quote and how this evidence supports the topic sentence)
4. Purpose: explain what the author wants us to learn/know/understand from this example

## **Suggested further reading:**

### **Novels**

- The Telesā series: I am Daniel Tahi (Bk2), When the Water Burns (Bk3), The Bone Bearer (Bk4),
- Ocean's Kiss (Telesā world)
- The Pyre of Queens by David Hair: <https://davidhairauthor.com/Books/The-Return-of-Ravana-Series/Pyre-of-Queens>

### **Poetry:**

Dr Selina Tusetala Marsh:

- Fast Talking Pl: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44mqyrvjCgY>
- Warrior Poetry: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LmwRKHs6do>

- Conversations: Poet laureate Selina Tusitala Marsh on being a Pasifika role model [https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&-objectid=12207395](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&-objectid=12207395)

Other:

- Tusiata Avia: 'Wild Dogs Under My Skirt'
- Apirana Taylor: 'The Fale'
- Hinewirangi: 'Earth Mother'

### **Short stories**

- 'Black Marks on a White Page', ed. Witi Ihimaera and Tina Matereti
- 'Pūrākau: Māori Myths Retold' ed. Whiti Hereaka and Witi Ihimaera.

### **Film:**

- 'Moana' [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3521164/?ref=mv\\_sr\\_l?ref=mv\\_sr\\_l](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3521164/?ref=mv_sr_l?ref=mv_sr_l)