



TELESĀ: The Covenant Keeper

by Lani Wendt Young

About the Author:

Lani Young is an award-winning writer, publisher and journalist. She is the 2018 ACP Pacific Laureate selected by the African, Caribbean, Pacific Group of States. Born and raised in Samoa, she attended university in the USA and New Zealand. Storytelling is her passion. She's the author of ten books and has won multiple awards for her short fiction. She's worked as a scriptwriter for Disney, and her stories for children are published by the NZ School Journal.

Her work is described as witty, ironic and delicious, flavored with poetic descriptions; garnished with intense passion; coated in relaxed atmosphere of the Samoan archipelago (Tales from Pasifika, April 2015).

Synopsis of Novel:

Samoan/American Leila Folger, a teenager from Washington D.C, insists on going to Samoa after her father's sudden death to learn something of her mother who, she believes, died when she was an infant. All she wants is to meet her mother's family, get to know something more about her heritage, and find a place she could call 'home'. But from the very beginning nothing seems to go her way. Leila's aunt Matile and uncle Tuala do not want to talk about her mother, she is forced to abide by strict rules and has to adjust to Samoa College – a school she needs to attend.

As time goes by, however, Leila starts to settle into her new environment. She is befriended by Simone, a friendly and stylish fa'afafine who instantly becomes her best friend, and meets Daniel, a handsome captain of the SamCo's rugby team. Even though Leila and Daniel seem like total opposites at first, they quickly become attracted to each other and gradually develop a romantic relationship.

Leila's life changes dramatically when she discovers a strange heat growing inside her body. A fiery response to a hostile youth at an interschool rugby match brawl leaves him with burns and her in confusion. Having no idea what caused this or why the fire burns inside, she starts looking for some answers. And she gets them when she meets her mother, Nafanua. The beautiful woman introduces Leila to the fractious and ruthless sisterhood of Telesā. When Leila discovers she is heir to a fiery birthright, she must choose between the Sisterhood and Daniel who she loves. Nafanua, teaches Leila how to control the gift she has and, for a short time, Leila sees the 'good works' the Sisterhood do to protect and keep safe the land. With Daniel no longer 'in the picture', Leila is free to make new friends including Jason an American volcanologist.

Despite the warnings from her mother to never tell anyone about their powers, especially not to a man, Leila confides in Jason after she saves his life. As 'punishment', Jason is poisoned and Leila sees clearly how her mother and the other 'sisters' are using their powers to hurt people. She breaks away from them and, with Daniel's help, gets the antidote Jason needs, saving his life. A final exciting show-down with Leila, her mother, and the other Telesā finishes the story with a satisfying ending.



A: Close up on Character:

Themes/topics:

mother-daughter relationships, romance, environmental concerns, high school, the importance of family, friendship, culture clash, Pasifika mythology, finding one's place in the world, resilience.

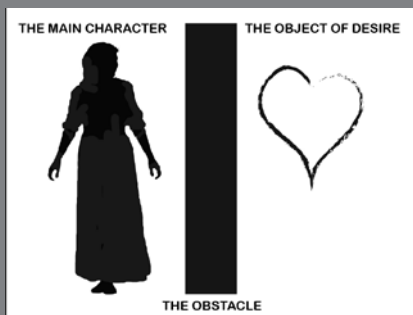
Main Character:

Novels have least one fully-rounded character. We know 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). In this novel, we have ONE main character, Leila. She is our 'hero'.

When considering the characters in the novel, 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'S WANTS CONFLICTS WITH THEIR NEEDS

What a character thinks they...

WANT (plot)

_____ is in direct **CONFLICT** with what they _____

NEED (story)

CHARACTER STUDY:

1. Do a character study of Leila by completing the following tasks:

- Describe her 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 novel?
- List the problem(s)/obstacle(s)/people who/that get in the way.
- Write down two or three things the Leila does to try to a) 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:
 - I was painfully homesick. Which didn't make sense because I didn't have a home. I didn't belong here. But then, I didn't belong in D.C either. I was a halfcaste disappointment to my grandmother. A disturbing reminder to my

aunt of a woman it seemed everyone would rather forget. Face it Leila – you’re an in-between nothing and nobody wants you around. pg 104

- Unwillingly I faced my truth. No, my fiery temper was nothing new. My joy in anger and violence had always been there. pg 284
- “I don’t want to be different, gifted, or special. I just want to be regular. Belong somewhere for the first time in my life.” pg 310
- “You listen to me. I was lost for a little while, but now I’m clear. I know who I am. And what I’m not. I’m not your daughter. I’m not a psychopathic Telesā killer like you and your sisters. I’m Michael Folger’s daughter. I can set this world on fire and I will use all my gifts to stop you and your sisters if you dare come near any of my friends or family again.” pg 549

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, choose ONE of the minor characters:

- a) Describe what they are like.
- b) Explain why they are important to Leila’s story.

- Daniel
- Nafanua
- Jason

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.

3. Choose TWO of the characters in the list below.

- a) Describe each character.
- b) What is their purpose in the story?

- Maleko
- Simone
- Mele
- Sarona
- Uncle Tuala
- Aunty Matile
- Salamasina (Daniel’s ‘mama’)
- Grandmother Folger

4. Read the character description below and do the tasks which follow:

A cluster of boys were admiring the sleek lines, but they had even more to drop their jaws at when the driver alighted from the air-conditioned comfort. A naked, slender leg exited first, her long white skirt cut to the thigh. Cut to show the patterned markings of a malu, the traditional Samoan tattoo given to a woman. I rolled my eyes. I’d give her this much, this woman knew how to

make an entrance. She unfurled from the car, a blinding vision in white that hugged her every sinuous curve. Gold stiletto heels should have made her unsteady on the rocky drive but she walked with confident ease towards me. Chunks of gold banded her bare arms, and again at her neck. Sunglasses obscured the cold eyes. The thick brown hair was pulled up into a generous coil. She didn't walk as much as she seemed to glide, emanating sensuality. The more daring of the boys threw her a whistle. She didn't even flinch. But out of a perfectly blue sky, a jagged flash of lightning whipped, distracting all eyes heavenward. Startled, the crowd of leers jumped. I stood and watched her with impassive eyes. pg 200-201

a) Find one example of each of the following language techniques:

- i. personification:
- ii. hyperbole:
- iii. rhyme:
- iv. metaphor:
- v. repetition:

b) Using the descriptions above, draw a picture of the Nafanua.

c) 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.

5. Choose one of the essay topics below and write an character essay of about 300 words:

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

B: Close up on Style

The Covenant Keeper has one narrator: Leila.

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. *The Covenant Keeper* is written in first person narration, or point of view, which means that we, the reader, feel as if the character is speaking directly to us.

- a) What are some advantages of using first person narration?
- b) What are some disadvantages of using first person narration?
- c) Which narrative point of view do you prefer? Why?

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

*It was a long wait for them to check my passport and an even longer one for the bags to appear through the conveyance belt. That gave me time to study my surroundings even further. I had been to several countries one could only classify as VERY hot but this **sauna-like** heat was different. It was wet and heavy. I struggled to find **pockets of oxygen** to fill my gasping lungs. Only a half hour landed and I was longing for a cold shower, wishing I could peel away **these sweat-soaked** clothes. A floral shirted band played for our listening pleasure – four men with a **ukulele, guitar, wooden drum, and another unknown string instrument**. My mood lifted at their song – a cheerful melody of Samoan words. It was the first time I had heard the language of my mother being spoken and I was fascinated. **The words flowed and rippled** in a rhythmic flow that tried to tug me along with it. I was almost sorry when my one suitcase appeared and it was my turn to pass through the security detector. pg 13*

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

personification metaphor alliteration simile personification listing

- a) sauna-like _____
- b) pockets of oxygen _____
- c) these sweat-soaked clothes _____
- d) a ukulele, guitar, wooden drum... _____
- e) My mood lifted at their song _____
- f) The words flowed and rippled in a rhythmic flow that tried to tug me along with it. _____

3. Extension task: Choose one of the following scenes and re-write from the point of view of the named character:

- a) Daniel Tahi: the class debate pg 57 - 62
- b) Salamasina (Daniel's 'mama'): Daniel brings Leila to meet her the first time pg 236 – 239
- c) Jason: when he and Leila are in danger because of Matavanu pg 426 - 436
- d) Mele: when Leila performs the taupou pg 484 - 487
- e) Nafanua argues with Leila about the reasons for destroying the village: page 462 -469

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.

The Covenant Keeper is written in **PAST** tense.

- a) What is one advantage of using past tense?
- a) What is one disadvantage of using past tense?
- b) Which do you prefer? Why?

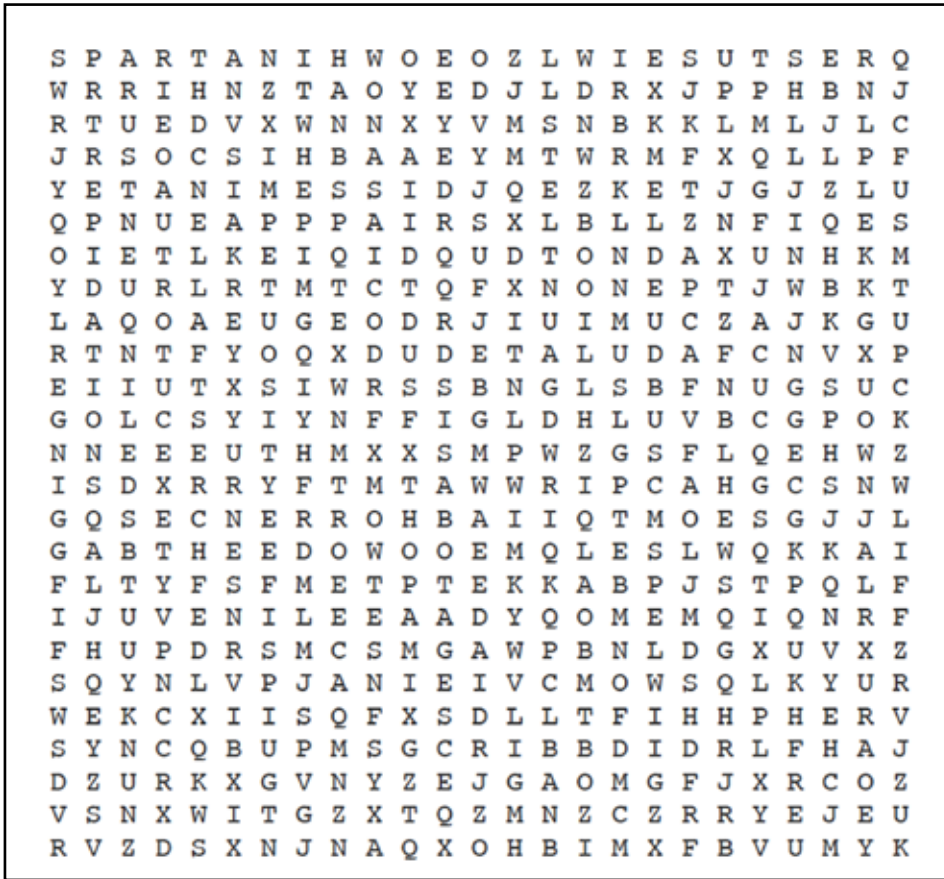
5. Vocabulary exercises:

a) Match the words in the left hand column with the definitions in the middle column by drawing a link from the word to the definition.

Words	draw link	Definitions
aberration		To run or dance around playfully.
acquiescence		An angry and vicious verbal against a person or something.
assuage		A noisy fight, quarrel or disturbance.
cacophony		To be unaffected by; waterproof.
conduit		To take away or lessen negative or horrible feelings (about something).
desecrate		To be full of cheerful and excited energy.
diatribe		A giving in or agreeing to something without protesting.
exuberant		An unnecessary or extravagant decoration of language, manner of dress or building construction.
fracas		A channel (or a means of) transporting water or power or other forms between two things.
fripperies		To treat something with disrespect especially a sacred place or object.
gamboling		Not normal or usual; unexpected occurrence.
impervious		A harsh and discordant sound made up of a mixture of noises.

6. Word-find. Find the words from the list under the puzzle.

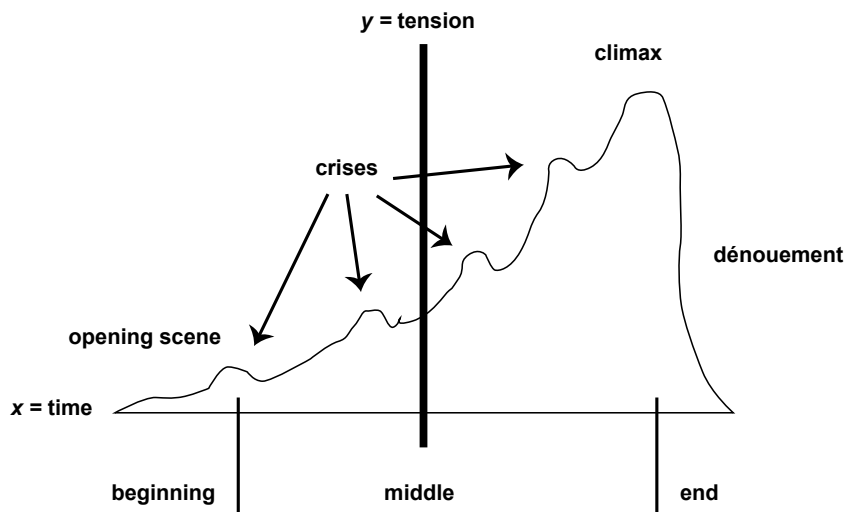
THE COVENANT KEEPER WORD SEARCH



- ABHORRENCE
- ADULTATED
- ANGST
- CRESTFALLEN
- DELINQUENTS
- DISSEMINATE
- EXASPERATION
- EXECUTOR
- FAMISHED
- FELONIES
- GAUNTLET
- GINGERLY
- GUFFAW
- IMPETUOSITY
- JUVENILE
- LUXURIANT
- MISDEMEANOURS
- NEMESIS
- NUANCES
- OBLIGATORY
- PRECIPITOUS
- REDEEMED
- SABOTAGE
- SPARTAN
- SUBDUED
- TREPIDATION

C. Close up on Plot

The events which happen in the story, constructed in such a way as to cause the characters to go ‘on a journey’ – either a physical one, an emotional/spiritual one or both. Each plot point must increase the tension of the story with action rising to a climax/crises point.



TO DO

1. EITHER

Put these key plot points in order:

1. At the rugby game between Samoa College and Leiffi, Leila burns a boy.
2. Daniel arrives at ‘Leila’s’ pool.
3. Daniel takes Leila to a special place where his grandmother picks ginger plants.
4. Daniel takes Leila to meet his grandmother but the grandmother is not happy.
5. Daniel washes up on the beach alive and Leila sees a wave tattoo on his hip which means he is Telesā too – of the water.
6. Daniel’s grandmother makes the cure for Jason and tells Leila the story of how Daniel came to live with them. Jason recovers.

7. Jason and Leila return to Matavanu where Leila save Jason's life and she had to tell Jason everything. He promises to find a 'cure'.
8. Jason becomes fatally ill with an unknown affliction so Leila makes a deal with Nafanua: a cure for Jason's illness if Leila agrees to return to the coven.
9. Leila and Daniel are captured and tortured by the coven. Daniel is stabbed and tossed into the sea.
10. Leila and the other Telesā destroy chemical waste dumped by a local factory.
11. Leila arrives in Samoa.
12. Leila battles Sarona and Nafanua and the other Telesā die.
13. Leila begins to feel hot and finds the pool.
14. Leila catches fire for the first time and she learns she is Telesā.
15. Leila collapses at school.
16. Leila debates Daniel in class.
17. Leila gets her malu.
18. Leila has to do detention.
19. Leila leaves Nafanua's house and tells her that she doesn't want anything more to do with her mother or the Telesā.
20. Leila meets Jason, goes to Matavanu with Jason and learns she can 'speak' to the volcano.
21. Leila meets Nafanua (her mother) and learns she had a twin brother who died not long after he was born.
22. Leila performs the taupou with Daniel and their house wins the competition.
23. Nafanua takes Leila to her house and she decides to stay.
24. Nafanua teaches Leila how to siva and Leila is chosen to be the taupou in the house competition.
25. Nafanua trains Leila to control the fire.
26. The Telesā destroy a village and kill four men responsible for butchering a mother whale and her calf.

OR Using the plot diagram like the one above, place on the graph the key action points including the climax and resolution

2. Choose FIVE key plot points and describe how Leila is feeling/thinking at each point and why does this matter to the story?

3. Thinking back to your work on the main character's wants (vs needs):

- a) Where and when on this diagram does Leila get what she wants?
- b) Where does she get what she needs?
- c) Which comes first?
- d) Why do you think it must happen this way?

4. Extension Activity: What happened next?

Choose one of the following writing tasks:

- a) Write an epilogue to the novel: it is a year later. Daniel and Leila are having Christmas with Aunty Matile and Uncle Tuala. Write a summary of that scene – include details of what Leila and Daniel have been doing since that terrible night on the beach.
- b) Imagine you are Jason: write a letter or email to a very good friend and colleague back in America. Tell them about what happened to you and your thoughts about Leila.
- c) Imagine it is many, many years later and Leila has returned to Samoa College to speak to the students at the assembly. Write a two minute speech which you hope will be an encouragement to the students.
- d) Read the next books in the Telesā series.

D: Closer look at Setting

Time and place affect what information is included in a novel and will have bearing on the actions and attitudes of your characters. Be mindful of your own beliefs and experiences as you read (judge) these characters. Ask yourself why you think the author has set this story in this place, during this time. The novel is set in modern day Samoa.

i. Copy a map of Samoa. You might like to try here:

<http://ontheworldmap.com/samoa/large-detailed-map-of-samoa.jpg>

ii. Identify, on the map, these places from the novel:

Aleisa	Lalomanu	Pesega	Siumu	Vaimoso
Apia	Matavanu	Satumea	Tafaigata	
Fagalii	Palolo Deep	Savaii	Upolu	

iii. On your own, or in pairs, describe Leila does at each of these places.

2. Either from what you already know, or find out or from reading the novel, fill in the chart below;

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

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

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

3. Read the extract and do the tasks which follow:

The sweltering heat embraced me, smothering me in its heavy wrap as I walked out. Sweat already trickling down my back; I slowly made my way across the tarmac and into the arrival building. People jostled and shoved trying to get in line for immigration check-in. For the first time, I took a good look at the people around me.

Lumbering ladies in floral print dresses sweated beside me in the line, shopping bags stuffed with chocolates, plastic flower wreaths and shiny keys that said 'Happy 21st!' There was an ancient Elvis

look-alike to my left, resplendent in flared pants and a half-buttoned shirt. Clutching a duty-free bag chock-a-block full of bottles of vodka that was making almost as much noise as his layers of gold chains. A little old lady in a sequined red dress stood beside him. I was feeling seriously under-dressed in my white cotton tee and favorite faded denim jeans, with only a backpack for hand luggage.

As the seasoned traveller, Dad had always emphasized to me the importance of traveling light – and dressing for the climate of your destination. The one time he took me on assignment with him to Nigeria we had squabbled for days over what items in my suitcase were actually deemed 'vital necessities.' My shampoo, face wash, and iPod had all lost the battle for inclusion. The shampoo and face wash because according to Dad's philosophy on personal hygiene - a bar of soap would do for everything. And I had a sneaking suspicion the iPod had lost out because Dad wanted there to be no excuse for me not to listen to him. It had been an amazing trip – the last we had taken together.

An explosion of gangsta-style swearing startled my thoughts. Three hulking boys wearing baggy jeans that dragged on the ground and huge t-shirts that would fit a whole extra person were complaining angrily at the back of the line about the long wait. I shook my head, with a shiver of disgust at their rudeness. The immigration official at the desk contemplated them with a sardonic expression and then returned to lazily stamping passports.

page 11-13

a) In one or two sentences, describe where Leila is and what is happening.

b) What does Leila think about the people in this scene? 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.

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

d) Highlight the words in the on list that follows that are used in the extract that help contribute to the overall tone of the piece.

sweltering	heat	embraced	smothering	heavy	sweat
jostled	shoved	lumbering	floral	stuffed	chocolates
plastic	old	flower	wreaths	shiny	resplendent
ancient	gold	startled	sequined	squabbled	battle
explosion	gangsta	swearing	wait	hulking	dragged
huge	angrily	long	lazily	shiver	
disgust	rudeness	sardonic	complaining		

By choosing these specific words, Lani Wendt Young makes us feel like we are experiencing stress and uncertainty felt by Leila as she first arrives in Samoa. The author has specifically chosen words to create a tone which helps build up a sense of the unknown, of being out of her comfort zone, of the heat, noise, and crowds. This small scene description helps us to picture exactly what it is like for Leila.

e) Extension 1: Take 8-10 of the author's words and write a short paragraph describing a time that you experienced going to a new place very different to what you were used to. For example, the first day at a new school, going into a busy cities, arriving in a new country....

f) Extension 2: Reading Comprehension:

Read the two extracts below and then do the activities.

The malu

*A malu is a tattoo given to women in Samoa. It is applied using hand instruments. Mini chisels and adzes with razor sharp edges made from animal bone are used to repeatedly tap and cut the skin open while hands pull the skin taut and tight. When the skin is pierced and blood flows, the adze is dipped in the pigment ink. And the adze taps again, cutting into the skin, leaving its markings. While the tattooist does their work, women sit there beside the recipient. They sing songs of her ancestors. They tell stories of the women who walked before her. The lives they led. The battles they fought. The children they bore. The men they loved. They trace her lineage back to Nafanua the war goddess. Back to Tangaloa-lagi, god of the earth. They distract her from the pain of the instruments. The biting gnawing pain as the adze cuts and cuts again. They wipe the sweat from her brow and if there are tears, they will wipe those away too. When she cannot continue a moment more, they will pause with her, give her cold water to drink. Help her walk down to the beach to bathe in the ocean, supporting her with strong arms as she flinches against the bite of the salt. The cut of the whipping wind and the grate of the sand. And then back to the biting adze. When the pain builds in waves, threatening to overwhelm her, they will hold her hands in theirs, holding her firmly to the earth, holding her captive to consciousness. Keeping her firmly anchored to this mind-numbing agony. They will not let her escape it. But they will her the strength to endure. Endure. Endure. Endure. We are with you. Endure. **Page 359***

- i. In two or three sentences, using the information, provide an explanation of what a malu is, why it is important, and how it is created.
- ii. Research examples of malu.
- iii. A malu communicates a specific message about the person who is getting the tattoo. Create a design for yourself that tells the viewer something about you, your strengths/weaknesses, your family connections, the things you love...

The three gifts:

Now, there are three different gifts, each attuned to one piece of our mother. First, there is Telesā matagi. We are woven to the atmosphere's currents, and patterns. We can speak to the wind, storms, the rain....The second gift is water. Well, ocean. Telesā vasa loloa. They are woven with the sea and, to some extent, rivers and streams. That brings me to the final gift. Yours. Earth. Telesā fanua afi. Earth fire. It is potentially the most powerful and the most rare. Polynesian mythology speaks of the volcano goddess Pele, as the creator and the destroyer of lands. Your gift comes from the earth's core. There is incredible heat, pressure, and movement there. You will be attuned to the earth's movements, currents. You will control fire. Summon volcanoes. Call earthquakes. Mafui'e. And in many ways, Pele can call on the gifts of her sisters. Your earthquakes can move the waters. Call on the earth to bring forth life. But understand me clearly my daughter – Earth does not give her gift without a price. Yours is the power that is most difficult to control. Once unleashed, fanua afi does not often willingly recede. Your gift is intertwined with your emotions. Anger. Fear." Pg 314-316

- i. In two or three sentences, summarise the passage.
- ii. Think of another culture (your own, an ancient one, a foreign one) and research their mythology around water, fire, air.
- iii. List the similarities and differences between these stories.
- iv. If you could have a special gift, what would it be and why would you want it?

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.

1. Using the 'Three Level Reading Guide' to help 'unpack' the text

This guide will help you to gain a deeper understanding of the text, starting with the basics and going towards a deeper analysis of the text.

a) Read each statement below and circle whether it is true or false.

Level One: Literal meanings or 'On the Surface' statements. The information can easily be found in the text.

- | | |
|---|------------|
| a) Leila is from America. | TRUE/FALSE |
| b) Stormtrooper is the name of Aunt Matile's dog. | TRUE/FALSE |
| c) Daniel owns a mechanics business. | TRUE/FALSE |
| d) Mele is Maleka's girlfriend. | TRUE/FALSE |
| e) Leila is a twin. | TRUE/FALSE |
| f) Daniel is captain of the soccer team. | TRUE/FALSE |

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.

- | | |
|--|------------|
| a) Jason is a good friend. | TRUE/FALSE |
| b) Sarona is jealous of Leila. | TRUE/FALSE |
| c) Daniel knows the truth about his parents. | TRUE/FALSE |
| d) The Telesā only use their gifts for evil. | TRUE/FALSE |
| e) Leila doesn’t belong in Samoa. | TRUE/FALSE |
| f) Leila is a bright student. | TRUE/FALSE |

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.

- | | |
|--|------------|
| a) Parents understand the needs of their children. | TRUE/FALSE |
| b) No matter where you go, you will always encounter people who will not like you. | TRUE/FALSE |
| c) True love cannot be destroyed or diminished. | TRUE/FALSE |
| d) Follow your heart whatever the cost. | TRUE/FALSE |
| e) Hide who you really are lest people take advantage of you. | TRUE/FALSE |

b) Choose one of the Level Three statements (*Going Beyond the Lines*) that you believe is TRUE and explain why you think it is true. Use evidence from the text to support your answer:

Number: ____ This is true because

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

- Aid agencies don’t understand the needs of the people of the Pacific.
- We must use the talents we are given for the benefit of others.
- People must always pay for their mistakes.
- “Modern science and Western medicine rip off traditional healers.”
- “If more people adhered to a truly natural and organic diet and lifestyle – then more people would live healthier and longer lives.”

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 novel 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

Important/interesting quotations from the novel:

- Not for the first time, I felt my ‘alone-ness’ keenly emphasized. No parents, no brothers or sisters. A distant grandmother. Kind but distracted uncles. Several cousins way older than I and already busy with raising families. That was about the full sum of my family. I hardly dared hope – even in the darkest recess where I admitted my deepest secrets – that this alone-ness would change, that my desire for a family to belong to had been my real motivation for coming a thousand miles to this unknown land. **Page 14**
- I had come here to find out about my mother and her family (however unsavory they may be, I thought darkly) **Page 18**
- Nigeria had been beautiful – in a stark, dry kind of way. Rolling hills and red earth. But the tired desperation of so many of the people we had met had gone a long way to obscure the land’s promise. It had been difficult too, to accept the appalling poverty of so many – contrasted with the sleek high-rise wealth of the cities. **Page 19**
- Aha she can’t be that bad if she loves such a hideous beast I thought to myself with some triumph. **Page 20**
- “You have come a long way. To be with people you know nothing about. That, at least, took courage.” **Page 21**
- Too brown to be white but too white to be brown. **Page 23**
- Thinking of the old woman sitting in her Potomac mansion, reaching out with money-driven tentacles to control me, even now. Even here, thousands of miles away in Samoa. I began to seethe. **Page 26**
- I thought I would escape all that, here in this tropical paradise. But who was I trying to fool? Even here, I was Leila Pele Folger. A child with no real family. No friends. An anger management problem. **Page 28**
- For the first time, I considered the dreadful possibility that coming to Samoa had been a huge mistake. **Page 36**
- I hadn’t been the new kid twice in two years without picking up a few tips about the best way to deal with curiosity and zoo animal watchers. Be as boring and non-descript as possible and the fascination usually dies. Stare at the ground, keep to yourself, don’t speak up too much in class. **Page 50**
- It didn’t take rocket science to figure out that Samoan teens functioned in a classroom according to a markedly different code from those in the States. Here, the teacher’s word was law and the students addressed them with deferential respect, even the ‘naughty’ ones like the burly boy, Maleko. Students raised their hands when they had questions and nobody argued with the teacher. Another difference was their dress. Back home it had almost been a sign of one’s status to be as sloppy and dishevelled as possible. Here, there were no extreme haircuts, no makeup, and definitely no jewellery. **Page 51**
- Daniel “Let’s take an example, one of these supposed aid organizations – the US Peace Corp. They come here to volunteer, but really, aren’t they here to disseminate their foreign ideas and values? To convince us of their supremacy in all things?” **Page 60**
- Is this what belonging felt like? Is this how it felt to fit in somewhere? I wasn’t sure. I had never been just one of the crowd. No different from my peers. People teasing each other. Laughing. I had spent so many years looking at life from outside the window that it felt strange to actually be in the room with everyone else. **Page 73**

- I was painfully homesick. Which didn't make sense because I didn't have a home. I didn't belong here. But then, I didn't belong in D.C either. I was a halfcaste disappointment to my grandmother. A disturbing reminder to my aunt of a woman it seemed everyone would rather forget. Face it Leila – you're an in-between nothing and nobody wants you around. **Page 104**
- There had never been a person that I could just sit and BE with. Without the need to talk. Fill the gaps. For some reason, there didn't seem to be any gaps between me and this strange boy full of contradictions. **Page 160**
- Daniel: I don't think I've ever met anybody so defensive, so ready to launch into offensive mode. Are you used to getting trashed back home or something?" pg 162
- That night I was content. For the first time in forever, everything was starting to come right in my universe. I was fitting in. I wasn't the freak outsider anymore. A pathway of possibilities was blossoming in front of me. And all of them involved Daniel. I couldn't understand why it was that I felt so at peace when I was with him, but I wasn't going to question it. Everything was going to be alright ... was my final thought as I drifted to sleep. How wrong I was. This wasn't the beginning of happiness. It was the first step into the inferno of a living nightmare. **Page 166-167**
- Happiness is only ever a transient thing. Like fluff in the wind. Worthy only of derision because it only made what came next all the more awful. **Page 178**
- "You know, ever since my dad died, it's been me against the whole world. I've been so alone, there hasn't been anyone I can trust, anyone I can count on who really knows me or cares about me. But I could handle that, because I just held tight to the memory of my father, I held on to him in here and it didn't matter that I was alone. Because I knew he loved me." **Page 192**
- "And now, I find out that the man who said he loved me more than anything, the father who was everything to me – well, it turns out he was a big fat liar." **Page 192**
- There's always two sides to the story and when you're standing on the outside, you sure don't hold all the pieces to the puzzle you know? **Page 193**
- Daniel: "You're not alone Leila, you've got me." **Page 197**
- Nafanua: Too often, modern science and Western medicine rip off traditional healers. They take our plants, they take our knowledge, 'invent' a cure for something and then get filthy rich off it. And maybe they throw a few cents over their shoulder for the villagers who were foolish enough to give them the information in the first place. **Page 218**
- There's just so much Western science has to learn from native healers in all cultures. **Page 234**
- How could I have done that? What had come over me? How could I have so quickly become a creature so unfeeling, uncaring of those around me? Unwillingly I faced my truth. No, my fiery temper was nothing new. My joy in anger and violence had always been there. **Page 284**
- The father who had lied to me and gone to extreme lengths to keep me from ever even knowing my own mother. I had been angry at his deceit, but as Nafanua ranted on about 'spirit sisters' and sisterhood meetings and other meaningless jargon, I knew with a clear certainty that it had been a mistake to trust her. So what if Dad had lied to me. He had been trying to protect me. I was sure of it. From a scene exactly like this one. **Page 291**

- Nafanua: “If more people adhered to a truly natural and organic diet and lifestyle – then more people would live healthier and longer lives.” **Page 306**
- “I don’t want to be different, gifted, or special. I just want to be regular. Belong somewhere for the first time in my life.” **Page 310**
- Nothing was as it had seemed and all that I had believed to be ‘real’ and ‘important’ now seemed so paltry. And meaningless. And insignificant. **Page 311**
- For as long as I could remember, plants had made more sense to me than people. But I had always just assumed that was because I was a miserable people person. **Page 312**
- “You must embrace who you are and unchain yourself from all transient things. Men – all men, are unnecessary. Amusing, yes. And some even likeable. But they cannot even begin to comprehend what we are and what we are capable of. You must start practicing now to be less easily swayed by them.” **Page 326**
- Sitting beside a shimmering pool under a moonlit sky. I realized that when you had no agendas, no love feelings for a guy, you actually could be relaxed with him. Like the pressure to perform was off. Like you could just be yourself and not worry if they still liked you or not. **Page 342**
- “A Telesā must always be in control of her emotions. Only then can she hope to truly be one with her gifts.” **Page 346**
- “Nafanua, for the first time today, I felt like this Telesā thing really could be a gift and not a curse. Like, maybe it’s not so bad to be this after all.” I turned to her with pleading, confused eyes. “Does that make sense? Is that wrong of me to actually, maybe like this? I thought all I wanted was to be able to get rid of this thing, but today, I don’t know, maybe it is possible to be Telesā and still be me? Maybe Telesā IS me?” **Page 357**
- “Exactly. It’s not fair. It’s not right. That a few rich and powerful people should be able to do whatever they want so they can make more money and hurt countless others in the process. You’re right. This isn’t fair. So you can walk away from here or you can step up and help take responsibility. This is what we Telesā do. **Page 369**
- He’s not for you. He’s not for you. It was my mantra. Maybe if I said it enough, my heart would believe it? **Page 376**
- I was exhausted but exultant. It had felt amazing to use my gift to help. For good. As we celebrated back at the house with chilled lemonade and sandwiches, I looked around at the other Telesā and felt happy to be one with them. Today was a good day to be a Telesā . **Page 421**
- And no matter how much time I spent with the Telesā , I could never shake the slight edge of unease that I felt with them. On the outside they smiled and told me I was one of them, one of their ‘sisters’ but I couldn’t deny that deep inside, I was still afraid of them. **Page 422**
- As Matavanu awoke, I realized I had been only half alive until this moment. Everything else dissolved into meaninglessness. Everything. Daniel, Telesā , Nafanua, Jason, my life before this – it was nothing. Suddenly the world seems such a perfect place. Suddenly it moves with such a perfect grace. Suddenly my life doesn’t seem such a waste. It all revolves around you ... **Page 431**

- I wanted to tell him that he was the only friend I had at the moment. Well, the only friend who I could talk to about what I was going through. The only person who could come to this place filled with strange mystical happenings and make me feel normal. He was a reminder of what life was like before. Back home in D.C. Far away from Telesā and fire explosions and women who could live for hundreds of years. He was like a big brother. A smart, funny and caring brother. Or at least that's the lie I was telling myself. **Page 447**
- Nafauna: "You know nothing. That wasn't murder – it was justice. We are Telesā . That is what we do. We administer punishment when men forget how to honor the earth that gives them life. Without our warnings, where do you think men would be? Look around you, foolish little girl, this earth is dying. Every day she is raped by man's greed and lust. She is bleeding as they cut her open. Choking on man's poison. If there were more like us, then earth would be better protected. Man would give her the respect she deserved. Leila, we are Telesā, the protectors, the guardians, earths' weapons. Fanaa doesn't give us her gifts so we can waste them on moping, crying, and wishing we could be 'just regular girls like everyone else.' We are Telesā and this is what we do. The sooner you understand that, the sooner you can start paying Fanaa the honor she deserves. You cannot fight against this, you are one of us. The sooner you embrace that, the better." **Page 463**
- You are not a prisoner here, Leila. Go and come as you like. But remember, we are the only ones who can give you the instruction you need. We are the only ones who can keep the world safe – from YOU." **Page 464**
- I've spent a lifetime in places where I don't belong – and now I'm home." As I said the words, I realized exultantly, that I meant them. It was true. I was home. Samoa was home. I had a huge smile of self-realization as I continued. "And Mele, nobody – especially not a jealous little girl like you – is going to drive me away from where I belong. Sorry!" **Page 485**
- Daniel: You're not a monster. This power is frightening and I can't even begin to imagine what you're going through but it doesn't define you. And you shouldn't let it dictate to you either. Your strength is one of the things I love most about you. I know you can control this. **Page 505**
- Daniel: "Nobody's perfect. We're all struggling with something. You don't love someone because they're a dream of perfection. You love them because of the way they meet their challenges, how they struggle to overcome. You love them because together you bring out the best in each other. **Page 506**
- You listen to me. I was lost for a little while, but now I'm clear. I know who I am. And what I'm not. I'm not your daughter. I'm not a psychopathic Telesā killer like you and your sisters. I'm Michael Folger's daughter. I can set this world on fire and I will use all my gifts to stop you and your sisters if you dare come near any of my friends or family again. **Page 549**
- Sarona: "A boy. And he bore the mark of Vasa Loloa – the wave crest on his hip. All water Telesā have them. **Page 571**
- Sarona: "You see, we didn't know then that your brother was actually your complement opposite, that Vasa Loloa was really the control for your fire, the neutralizer if you will... Your brother's water gift was meant to subdue your fire. **Page 574**
- But for now, Daniel walked beside me. And I knew that the covenant of love between us was unbreakable. For now, that would be enough. **Page 599**

Suggested further reading which students can use to make connections:

Novels

The Telesā series: , *When the Water Burns (Bk2)*, *The Bone Bearer (Bk3)*, plus *I am Daniel Tahi*

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 PI <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

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_=nv_sr_1?ref_=nv_sr_1

by **Tania Roxborough**

Answers

A: Close up on Character

4. Read the character description below and do the tasks which follow

a) Find one example of each of the following language techniques:

- vi. personification: 'Sunglasses obscured the cold eyes'; ...heels should have made her unsteady
- vii. hyperbole: drop their jaws; rolled my eyes
- viii. rhyme: more....jaws; gold....cold;

ix. metaphor: unfurled from the car; I rolled my eyes; a blinding vision;

v. repetition: cut...cut; gold...gold;

B: Close up on Style

- 2. a) simile
- b) metaphor
- c) alliteration
- d) listing
- e) personification
- f) personification

5. Vocabulary exercises:

a)

Words	Definitions
aberration	Not normal or usual; unexpected occurrence.
acquiescence	A giving in or agreeing to something without protesting.
assuage	To take away or lessen negative or horrible feelings (about something).
cacophony	A harsh and discordant sound made up of a mixture of noises.
conduit	A channel (or a means of) transporting water or power or other forms between two things.
desecrate	To treat something with disrespect especially a sacred place or object.
diatribe	An angry and vicious verbal against a person or something.
exuberant	To be full of cheerful and excited energy.
fracas	A noisy fight, quarrel or disturbance.
fripperies	An unnecessary or extravagant decoration of language, manner of dress or building construction.
gamboling	To run or dance around playfully.
impervious	To be unaffected by; waterproof

b) Match the synonyms

Synonym	Word
inflammatory	incendiary
mysterious	inscrutable
listing	litany
average	mediocrity
stupid	obtuse
careless	perfunctory

Antonym
peacemaking
obvious
random
exceptional
intelligent
careful

25. Leila battles Sarona and Nafanua and the other Telesā die.
26. Daniel washes up on the beach alive and Leila sees a wave tattoo on his hip which means he is Telesā too – of the water.

D: Closer look at Setting

Positive words

sweltering	heat	embraced	smothering	heavy	sweat
jostled	shoved	lumbering	floral	stuffed	chocolates
plastic	old	flower	wreaths	shiny	resplendent
ancient	gold	startled	sequined	squabbled	battle
explosion	gangsta	swearing	wait	hulking	dragged
huge	angrily	long	lazily	shiver	
disgust	rudeness	sardonic	complaining		

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

1. Using the 'Three Level Reading Guide' to help 'unpack' the text

Level One:

- g) Leila is from America. TRUE
- h) Stormtrooper is the name of Aunt Matile's dog. FALSE
- i) Daniel owns a mechanics business. FALSE
- j) Mele is Maleka's girlfriend. TRUE
- k) Leila is a twin. TRUE
- l) Daniel is captain of the soccer team. FALSE

Level Two:

- g) Jason is a good friend. TRUE
- h) Sarona is jealous of Leila. TRUE
- i) Daniel knows the truth about his parents. FALSE
- j) The Telesā only use their gifts for evil. FALSE
- k) Leila doesn't belong in Samoa. FALSE
- l) Leila is a bright student. TRUE

Level Three: Can be True or False – students to explain their choice.