

THE BOOK AND BEYOND

An educator's guide for exploring children's and YA literature

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Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa
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OF NEW ZEALAND

Title: Teine Sāmoa

Author(s): Dahlia Malaueulu

Illustrator(s):

The aim of The Book and Beyond is to inspire an interest and passion for books and reading. This section is for your thoughts, questions and notes about different aspects of the book and to consider how you might frame discussion with students.

The book

Physical object

- This edition is a smallish A5 paperback. Slim and light with yellowy/vanilla paper stock.
- The narrative/fictional element is 76 pages. Followed by discussion questions, and the Teine Sāmoa project real-life stories.

Design & cover

- The cover features a taupou who is looking down in service and respect. Overall this image epitomises beauty, goodness, grace and humility.
- The colour palette is soft and muted with a design that looks like a flax mat in the background.
- The taupou is off to the side and the eye is drawn to her headdress made of natural material.

Illustration

- No illustrations other than the cover picture taken by photographer Anita Peniata.
- Cover model is Azalia Le-Valasi Samasoni (the daughter of Anita Peniata).

Characters

- Four junior high school females.
- The chapters include their point of view and the simultaneous challenge and sense of identification in being Teine Sāmoa.
- Lani Sio — Pālagi mother, Sāmoan father, no real connection to Sāmoan heritage, can't speak or understand the language.
- Teuila Ekanesio — feels lonely as only girl in the family. Sees herself as a 'professional chameleon'. Recognises tensions between her own culture and Pālagi world.
- Masina Fetu — daughter of a church minister. Feels the pressure and restrained by expectations of her and the sacrifices that her parents made.
- Vai Amosa- Raised in Sāmoa, moved to NZ. A character who is misunderstood by the other characters as she seems confident in her identity.
- The girls' parents are essential in providing the reader with an alternative perspective.
- The teachers are challenged to build and develop their own cultural responsiveness through their interactions with the girls.

Plot

- Driven by the girls navigating the cultural challenges of young Sāmoan women growing up in New Zealand and making sense of being Sāmoan in the Pālagi world
- Includes a variety of different perspectives — girls, parents, teachers.
- Follows the characters and their experiences in school, work, family and life.

Setting

- We are taken through the girls' experiences at junior high school and their home life in New Zealand.
- No specific time and place are identified, but it is urban, present-day Aotearoa New Zealand, with a glimpse of village life in Sāmoa.

Theme & message

- The challenges and tensions involved with the journey of cultural identity and self-discovery.
- Exploring what it is to be Teine Sāmoa.
- 'Aiga life — service, reciprocity, love, respect, loyalty and expectations.

Language

- The language/tone of the girls is realistic and relatable — a mix of recount and introspection.
- Written in English, integrated with Sāmoan words and phrases throughout.
- Sāmoan proverbs bookend the narrative and emphasise the themes.

Mood & feeling

- There is a feeling of confusion with the girls feeling proud of their culture but also unsure of how it fits in with the Pālagi world.
- A strong feeling of pressure and wanting to do their families and their culture proud.

Genre & format

- This is a Pasifika fictional novel with a non-fiction section including study questions and real-life stories.
- It is a YA, coming-of-age novel.

The inquiry

Rich question(s)

This section is for creating and exploring questions that might guide an overall inquiry for a particular book. These questions might be inspired by ideas in the book section and/or personal responses and/or the NZ Curriculum and/or available resources.

When we can be dominated by ideas of what we 'should' be, how do you find and keep to an identity that remains true and authentic for yourself?

How do our personal experiences shape our view and expectations of others?

What turning points determine our individual pathways into adulthood?

How can languages be powerful — to identity, to culture, to ways of being?