

Cecilia Manueli

Story Time With Waka Books is the latest development in the Waka Story Book Series 2000 of the Institute of Education at the University of the South Pacific. It consists of four story kits, compiled for children at four levels. They are intended both for school and home use. In each kit there are five or six storybooks and a cassette tape with recordings of the stories. All the stories are in English.

Waka Stories

All the stories in these story kits are Waka stories, written by Pacific writers for Pacific children. Writers were selected for their story-writing skills and have at some time attended writers' workshops conducted by the Institute of Education to improve these skills and to write stories for publication. All the stories have been carefully chosen. They reflect the lives, interests and concerns of Pacific peoples.

As these stories unfold, children will find themselves in real life situations which they can relate to very easily, as the background and settings of the stories are often familiar. Children will quickly conjure up images that carry them through the stories.

Each story has a strong story line which can capture the young reader's interest and imagination. This is complemented and supported by the attractive and true-to-life illustrations by Pacific illustrators who rely not only on their imagination and creativity but also on real life for their illustrations.

Story Themes

Waka stories depict simple life experiences that most Pacific children are familiar with:

- ❖ family picnics - *Going to the Beach* by Bessie Kingdon,
- ❖ no water situations - *No Water* by Sue Mooar,
- ❖ stormy weather - *Our Blue Tent* by Sereima Lumelume and *The Big Tree* by Gweneth Deverell,
- ❖ fish stories - *Aiwan, Eidimida and the Shark* by Pearl Dageago and *Fish Again* by Meere Tion Tebeia,
- ❖ sailing home-made boats in the sea *Sail Ho* by Kolora Koroi translated by Anna O'Neill,
- ❖ school holidays - *Priya and Kaman's Holiday* by Sendar Pillay.

Culture and Tradition

Some of the stories reflect the cultures and traditions of Pacific peoples. A lot of emphasis has been placed on retelling local myths and legends which come from strong oral traditions. Through Waka books, Pacific myths and legends can now be more widely heard and read by our young people and preserved for future generations.

- ❖ *Maui Muri*, retold by Kairangi Bishop, is a delightful Cook Islands legend.
- ❖ *The Whale and the Sandpiper*, adapted by Jane Downing, is an oral traditional story from the Marshall Islands.
- ❖ *Why the People of Nui speak a Different Language*, retold by Maseiga Ionatana, is a legend from Tuvalu.
- ❖ *Two New Pillows* by Gweneth Deverell makes comparisons between a traditional pillow and a modern pillow.

Language

Writing specifically for Pacific children, Pacific writers have used clear, simple and carefully graded language to ensure understanding and comprehension. At the

same time, the style of writing makes even the most ordinary story exciting and interesting. Using Waka storybooks, especially those included in the story kits, will enhance children's literacy and language development.

The general grading of the kits and the cost are as follows:

Level 1

Six stories for pre-schoolers and children in Classes 1 and 2, aged from 5 to 7 years, read by Maraia Lesuma, \$20.30.

Level 2

Six stories for children aged from 7 to 9 years in Classes 3 and 4, read by Larry Thomas, \$20.80.

Level 3

Six stories for children of Classes 5 and 6 aged from 9 to 11 years, read by Teresia Teaiwa, \$20.55.

Level 4

Five stories for pupils aged from 11 to 13 years in Classes 7 and 8, read by Pio Manoa, \$22.05.

Most of the stories in the kits are already being used for shared, guided and independent reading in the English Language and Literacy programmes of many schools in Fiji and the USP region. We chose the stories for their appeal and popularity and know that these story kits can be an added bonus for any teacher with a class of considerable size. They can add variety to the reading programme and reinforce it, as well as give children hours of independent listening and reading enjoyment in the classroom or at home. A child's love of reading can be developed at a very early age and these story kits can certainly help nurture this.

Story time for the whole class can be a pleasurable time when teacher and pupils sit back and listen to a story on the tape. During this time the teacher has a well-deserved break and the pupils enjoy listening to another voice telling a story.

The music and sound effects add to the enjoyment. Experience has shown that this is something that children really look forward to.

The tapes are user-friendly and children can use the kits either individually or in small groups without any supervision, giving the teacher the opportunity to focus attention on other groups in the class. With some imagination a teacher will find that there are a variety of other ways in which the story kits can be put to good use. At reading time a small group of children can listen to a recorded story:

- ❖ without books, listening for enjoyment and to develop their love of reading,
- ❖ with books and reading silently or aloud to develop self-confidence and to improve their reading skills.

For reading in small groups or for a guided reading lesson each child will need a copy of the book so it is necessary to have extra copies of each title in the kit. Extra books are available at the Institute of Education.

I can assure teachers and parents that these story kits will enhance the English Language and Literacy programme in schools and, if used effectively, will cultivate children's love of reading, as well as improve their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Use them in the classroom or at home and watch your children learn.

Story kits are available at the Institute of Education and may be ordered from:

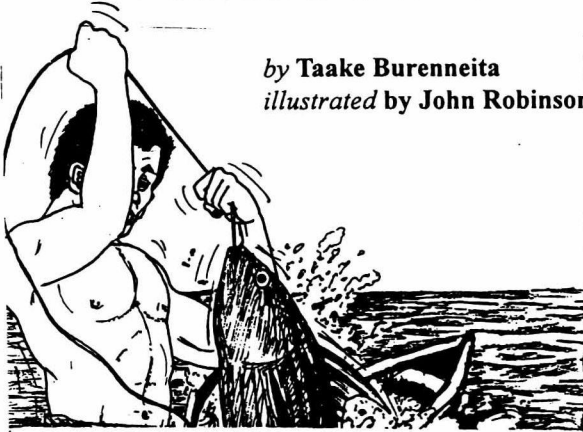
The Director
Institute of Education
The University of the South Pacific
Private Mail Bag
Suva

For more information, call Cecilia Manuelli on telephone 212393 or Shabnum Lata on 212154.

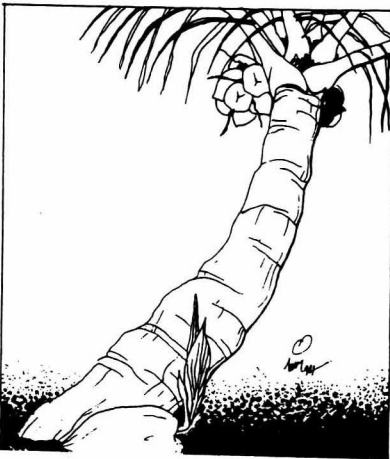


Dad Used To Do It

by Taake Burenneita
illustrated by John Robinson



COCONUT TREES



Jo's New Sister

by Gweneth Deverell
pictures by Sue Mooar



NODDY THE ACE FLIER

by Viola Defenamo

