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# Hagiama Island

Ellen Wairiu

## Key Words

*orchid, marine life, surround, favourite, variety, species, abundance, shrub, creepers*

Hagiama Island is a small, beautiful island with white sandy beaches. It is just south of the main island of Ngella. Across the water from Hagiama Island on Ngella is Koilovalala village. It takes between ten and fifteen minutes to paddle from the village to Hagiama Island in a dug-out canoe.

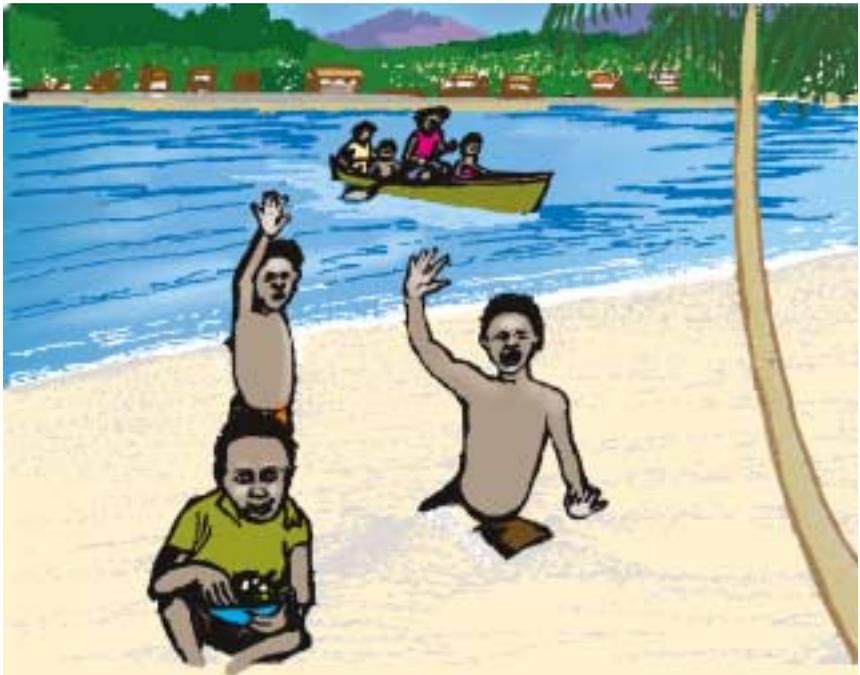


In the middle of Hagiama Island there is a small hill covered with thick bush. This hill attracts a variety of birds and other wild life. Parrots, pigeons, coconut crabs, and iguanas are found here.

The vegetation on the island consists of palm trees, fan palms, many different kinds of shrub including wild bennetnut, creepers, and local orchids. Indeed the beautiful and colourful orchid flowers on Hagiama Island have led to it being called the 'Garden Island' of Ngella.

Coral reefs surround Hagiama Island. These reefs support an abundance of marine life.

Families love the island very much. It is a favourite place to go for picnics, and for diving. People dive for fish, shellfish and other seafood, which they later cook over an open fire. Fishermen love fishing around the island too. When families come to picnic on Hagiama Island there are fresh coconuts to drink and eat. There is also a shallow well in the middle of the island. The well was dug some years ago by the grandfather of the present owner of the island.



The water from the well is not drinking water but is good to use for cooking and washing. It is perfect for a good wash after swimming in the sea. The only thing that people need to bring with them when they come for a picnic is drinking water and matches to light a fire to cook their catch.

# Whose Island?

Ellen Wairiu

In the lagoon a small island with a white sandy beach and a cluster of tall trees floated peacefully. She watched the passing traffic of dolphins, paddle canoes and schools of fish. There was nothing to disturb her in the lazy afternoon sunshine.

As she snoozed, a large leather back turtle heaved herself onto the beach and rested a while in the shallow water.

“Oh its good to be back on my island” sighed the turtle, enjoying the lapping waves as they tickled her body gently.

A screech from a nearby tree broke the silence as the cockatoo noisily interrupted the afternoon, “Your island?” she squawked. “Who says it’s your island? This island belongs to me!”

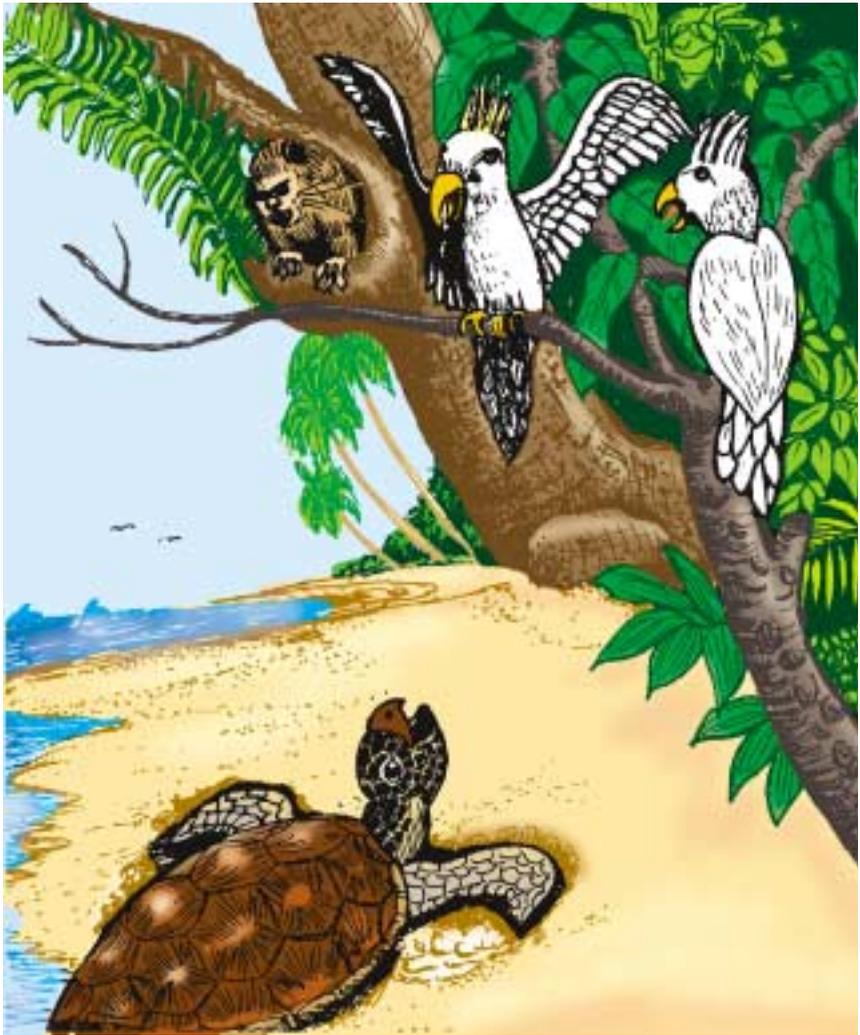
“How can you say that?” responded the turtle. “I have been coming here for nearly twenty years. Every year I lay my eggs right here on this beach. You can’t be more than four years old yourself. So how can you know whose island this is!”

“I’ve seen you,” screeched the cheeky cockatoo. I know you come here every year. I’ve watched you, but that doesn’t make it your island. I build my nest here and make it my home. This island is mine!”

Before the turtle could reply, a small voice spoke up from a hole in a hollow log.

“You two have disturbed my sleep with all your arguing,” said possum crossly.

“Actually this island is mine!” I can trace many generations of my family back. My mother was born here, my mother’s mother was born here and her mother before her. I think that gives me a better claim to this island than you creatures



who've just moved here to use its beaches and trees for yourselves!"

"Oooo grumpy!" squawked cockatoo, "My father's great grandparents were born here too. So that gives me a claim to this island."

"Liar!" interrupted the turtle, "That's rubbish and you know it is!"

Long ago this island was used by my ancestors to lay their eggs. My great grandmother told my grandmother about this island and my grandmother told my mother and my mother told me to come here and lay my eggs. So you see I do own this island.”

“No, no, no,” the cockatoo and the possum shouted together. The argument went on until suddenly, a deep but powerful voice spoke above the noise of the other animals. It was the voice of the Island.

“Stop it, all of you,” commanded the island. “You all should be ashamed of yourselves for arguing like this.”

The turtle, possum and the cockatoo stopped talking at once and waited anxiously to hear whom the island would declare to be the real owner.

“You do not own me,” said the island. “I own you. You belong to me. You depend on me. Do you understand?”

There was a short silence because that was not the kind of answer they were waiting for.

The island continued, more gently this time. “You creatures do not own the island, the sea or any other part of the planet. You belong to the earth, the earth does not belong to you!”

Quietly, thoughtfully the animals went back to their business. They did not feel like arguing anymore.

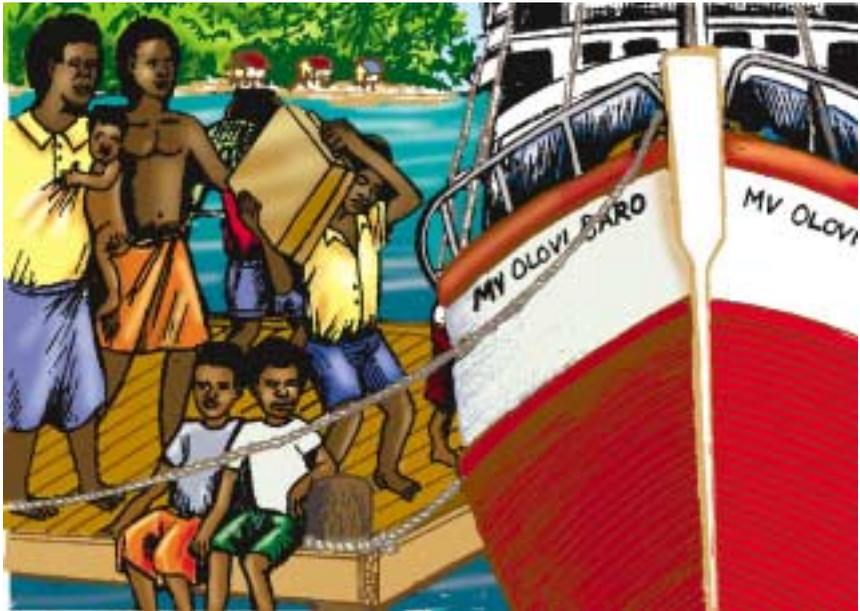
# My First Trip to Honiara

Lionel Damola

## Key Words

*port, bow, wharf, imagine, crew, anchored, captain, slowly, glimpse, homesick*

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when the MV Olovi Baro anchored at Marasa, a port in Guadalcanal Province. I was waiting with a group of friends who were to travel with me on the ship to Honiara. We were going away to school. As I was about to board the ship my mother and father kissed me for the last time and wished me good luck with my studies.



I climbed aboard the ship and found a place to sit in the bow. I was feeling so sad as the ship pulled away from the port that tears streamed down my cheeks. I looked back to catch a last glimpse of Marasa's curved bay just before our ship sailed past Vatu Odu Point. My mother stood near the swaying palms on the beach and waved until we went out of sight.

I had lived in my small village ever since I was born and had never travelled very far from home. I could imagine how my parents would feel when they returned home without me.

As the blazing sun sank in the west, it began to get dark. One of my friends came and sat next to me. He started to tell me about Honiara and the daily life of people there.

He told me how big the city was and how many people lived there. I listened as he talked for hours, but I was still sad about leaving my family. I could not really think about what my friend was saying because I felt homesick.

By nine o'clock that night, the moon was shining brightly and the stars twinkled. The sea was like a mirror reflecting the light of the moon and stars. The only noise that could be heard was the thumping of the ship's engine. Most of the passengers were asleep as the MV Olovi Baro steamed peacefully across the calm sea. It seemed as if the only people who were awake were the crew, my friend and me.

An hour later the ship suddenly jolted and came to a stop. We could hear worried voices as passengers woke up. The captain quickly asked the crew on the bridge what was happening.

"There is something floating about ten metres in front of the ship," a crewman explained.

The ship's bright lights flashed towards the floating object and we could see a huge log. The captain ordered the engine to be started again. Slowly the ship sailed away. Everyone stood at the side of the ship watching the log float away in the moonlight.

At four o'clock in the morning I was still awake. I could still see the stars but also other twinkling lights that seemed to spread across the high hills along the coast.

"These must be the lights of Honiara," I thought.

The MV Olovi Baro arrived at Point Cruz Wharf at about eight o'clock in the morning. I was amazed to see very tall buildings and many trucks, cars and bikes. There were so many new things that I had never seen before.

People were rushing around the wharf. I was frightened to leave the ship because it was my first time in such a busy place. I stayed where I was and watched all that was going on around the wharf. I think I would have been brave enough to stroll around after a while, but then the school truck arrived to collect us and take us to our new school.



# How Far is it to Auki?

Adapted from a Phillipine folk tale  
by Alison Blaylock

One day, an old woman packed her basket full of green coconuts, lifted it on to her head and set off for Auki to sell them in the market.

As she left her village behind she met an old man wobbling unsteadily along the road on his walking stick, “How far is it to Auki?” She asked.

“Only a couple of days walk!” smiled the man, leaning on his stick to rest. “You’ll be there by Wednesday!”

“Oh dear!” moaned the woman to herself, “I didn’t realise it was so far.”

Not many minutes later, she met a school teacher on the road.



“How far is it to Auki?” She asked.

“It’s exactly 5.4 kilometres” replied the school teacher. But the poor old woman didn’t know what a kilometre was, so she just smiled, said “goodbye” and carried on with her walk.

Next she met a taxi driver. He slowed down to see if she wanted a ride. "How far is it to Auki?" she asked him.

"For you, it would be about sixteen dollars," replied the taxi driver.

"Sixteen dollars!" repeated the old woman, "I haven't sold any coconuts yet so I don't have that kind of money," she grumbled as she continued on her walk.

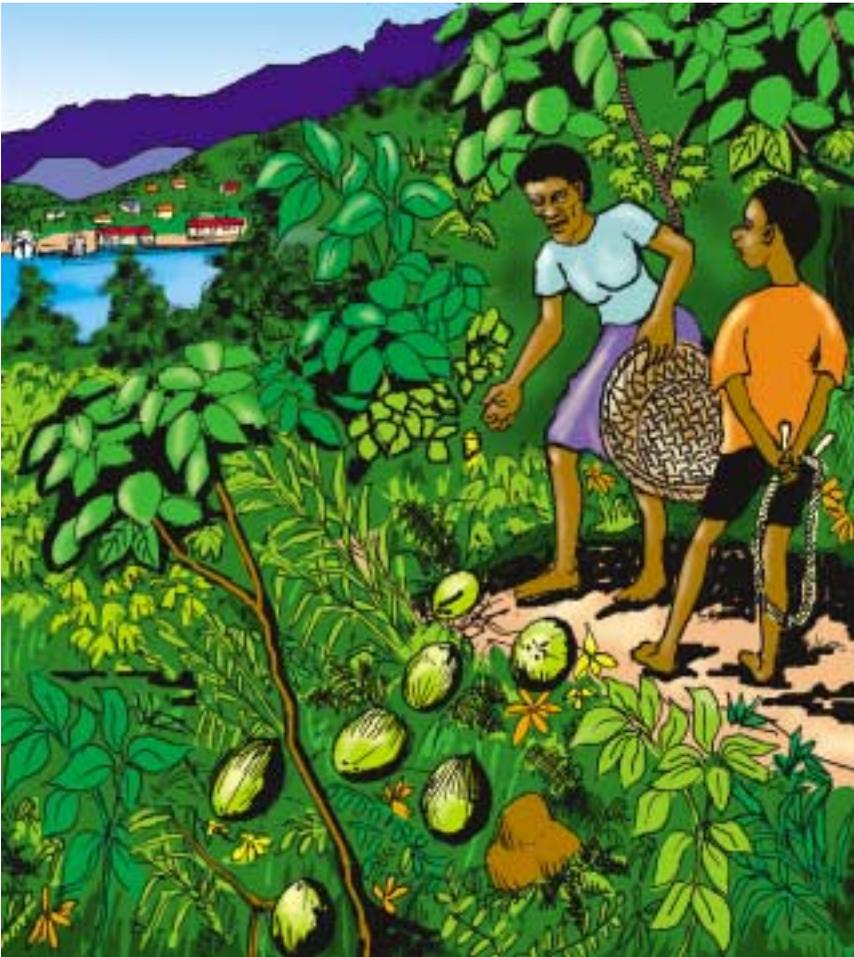
It wasn't many minutes before she met a young boy dancing and skipping along the road. "Good morning, Son," she called. "How far is it to Auki?" "That's easy" answered the boy with a cheeky grin. "If you hurry it will take you a long time, but if you go slowly you will get there very soon!"

Before she had time to reply, the boy has turned around and run off in the direction from which he came. The woman thought about what the boy had said and shook her head. "What a lot of nonsense!" she said to herself, "Surely I'll get there quicker if I hurry!"

As the woman continued on her way the sun was getting hot so she decided to hurry. She didn't want to get to market late. She picked up her step and started to go as fast as she could. As she did so three coconuts fell out of her basket and landed on the ground. She stopped, picked them up and put them back in the basket as quickly as she could, lifted the basket onto her head again and set off again, almost at a run this time.

In a few minutes more she tripped on a tree root and almost dropped the basket to the ground. Half of her coconuts rolled out and she spent several minutes bending down and gathering them all up again. At last she came around a corner and saw the town of Auki in front of her. So pleased was she to see her destination, that she forgot all about the basket on her head and broke into a run, once again the coconuts came tumbling out and started rolling down the hill.

The poor woman tried her best to collect them up again. "I'll never get to Auki at this rate!" she grumbled.



Just then she heard a voice behind her, “What did I tell you?” said the small boy with a smile. “If you hurry it will take you a long time, but if you go slowly you will get there very soon!”

“How right you were!” said the old woman. “Just look at me, the more I hurry, the slower I go”

The boy helped her to pick up the coconuts and to lift the basket back on to her head and together, they walked slowly into Auki, chatting and laughing as they went. In no time, they arrived at the market and the woman sold all her coconuts.

Well, all except two, one for herself and one for the small boy.

# The Flowers In Town

Stanley Cook

Among the busy streets  
In the middle of the town  
Is a flowery field  
Where houses have been knocked down.

The men with cranes and bulldozers  
Left the ground brown and bare  
Except for the broken bricks  
Scattered everywhere.

The ground was rough and bumpy  
And there the old bricks lay  
Like a set of building blocks  
That hadn't been put away.

But the seeds of flowers  
That were looking for a home  
Travelled there on the wind  
And made the place their own.

Ragweed that seems to be knitted  
Out of yellow wool  
And poppies like red crepe paper  
Have filled the hollows full.

High in the air, the willow herb  
Raises its pointed towers  
And daisies and butterfingers  
Pattern the grass with flowers.

Where the people used to live  
In the houses the men knocked down  
Bees and butterflies are busy  
In the flowers' new town.



# A Trip to Fiji

Ellen Wairiu

## Key Words

*imagine, finally, immediately, eventually, anxiously, immigration, coach*

Ella's favourite sport was tennis. She dreamt of becoming a tennis star when she was older. She started playing tennis in 1998 when she was seven years old. She was coached with other school children at the G. Club tennis courts in Honiara.



In October 2002 the tennis coach told everyone that there was to be an international junior tennis competition in Fiji. He told them that some young players would be chosen to represent Solomon Islands.

Ella was so excited when she learnt that she had been chosen to be in the team of four girls, two boys and a coach who would travel to Fiji. She just couldn't imagine what it would be like to fly in an aeroplane or to be in a different country - especially without her mum and dad.

The big day arrived. At Henderson Airport the players' parents helped them to check in at the airline desk. After saying goodbye to everyone who had come to see them off, the team went through to the immigration desk with their passports, tickets and boarding passes before they boarded the Vanuatu Airlines flight. They left Honiara on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2002 at 4:30 pm. They stopped over for an hour in Port Vila, Vanuatu. Later that evening they arrived at Nadi Airport in Fiji.

The Solomon Islands team stayed at the International Tennis Federation (ITF) house in Lautoka with some other young players from Fiji.

For the competition all the players were put into groups according to their age. Ella played in the under 12 age group. She did very well indeed. She won all her games and was very pleased with herself. The games were exciting and everyone

had a good time whether they won or lost. All the children in the Solomon Islands team performed well.



A few days before the team was due to fly home the players were told that their names were not on the list to travel on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December. The children were worried because some of them had run out of money. Their parents back in Solomon Islands had been told and they were worried too. The team's

coach worked very hard during those few days. He had to visit the airline office many times to try to get their names on the flight list. Eventually he managed to do it and they were all confirmed on the flight.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, Ella and her friends went to town to do some last minute shopping and to have a look around before leaving Fiji. They bought things for themselves and a few things to take back home for their brothers and sisters. Ella was looking forward to going home and telling everyone about her experiences, especially her younger brother.

Finally the time came to go home. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2002 the ITF van dropped them off at Nadi Airport. They flew out on Vanuatu Airlines and stopped over in Port Vila to pick up some more passengers who wanted to travel to Honiara. Early on Friday morning they arrived back at Henderson Airport.



At the terminal the team's families were waiting anxiously to see their children. The players and the coach were very happy to be back home with their families. Ella was so excited that she couldn't stop talking about her trip all the way home.

# Going Overseas

Ellen Wairiu

When I was little I always remember hearing people say, “He’s going overseas to study.” or “She’s going overseas to visit her aunty.”

“Going overseas?” I wondered to myself. “What do people mean by *overseas*?”

I decided it must mean flying *over the sea* in a plane. I thought that if somebody took a plane which flew over the sea then that meant they were *overseas*.

But I was wrong. When I asked my father about this overseas thing, he said going overseas means going to a different country, like one of our neighbouring countries such as PNG, or Fiji.

“When people say *overseas*”, he explained, “they usually mean they are going to a big country like Australia or New Zealand or even England.”

I thought that sounded very exciting so I told my father that I wanted to go overseas one day. He said, “Then you must study hard at school, and one day you might have a chance.”

When I entered the first year of primary school I held on to my dream that one day I would go overseas. I read about other countries in the books we had at school and tried to find out as much as I could. One day somebody in our village came back from a visit to Vanuatu. I had so many questions to ask them and was so interested to hear about their adventures in a different country.

When I was accepted to continue on to secondary school I really started to hope that my dream would come true, “Will I really be going overseas?” I thought to myself.

At that time if any student was lucky enough to get through to form VI they would definitely get a place overseas to continue their studies in New Zealand or Fiji.

But sadly, my dreams were ended when I did not get a place in Form IV.

I was very sorry for myself. I knew I had worked very hard and I knew I have done well, but because there was not enough space for everyone in Form IV I was one of many who were dropped out from the system at the end of Form III.

“I will never have the chance to travel now!” I thought to myself.

Christmas came and my father asked me where would I like to spend my holidays. I quickly chose Malaita but said,

“I want to go on a plane not by ship, I want to fly over the sea.”

My father agreed. Even though my dream didn't come true, at least I would be able to experience flying in a plane like those people who really go overseas!



So that was what I did. I was really happy and kept telling other children who had never been in an aeroplane what it was like to fly over the sea.

After the Christmas holiday I was lucky enough to get a job working on the pumps at Solomon Motors petrol station. There I learnt how to drive trucks. A year later I was working in the workshop helping others to fix trucks. I really learnt a lot from these jobs.

Four years later I was offered a job driving a tractor for the company who looked after the grass at Lawson Tama. I got the job because I knew how to maintain the tractor as well as drive it. I enjoyed learning how to look after the football pitch. I worked very hard because I loved my job and always wanted to learn more.

Then one morning, something surprising happened. Our manager told us that an organisation in Australia had offered to sponsor someone to attend a six month course on turf grass in one of their colleges. My heart nearly stopped beating when I heard that news.

“Will it be me?” I asked myself. “Is this my chance to go overseas at last?”

The manager continued, “I have chosen you to attend the course,” he said pointing to me. “Would you be interested?”

“Me? Yes I’d love to go,” I said, without hesitating.

On my way home that day I was so excited that I couldn’t stop singing to myself,

“Samfala no skul gud, bata bae go oversea, bikos oloketa waka hati.”

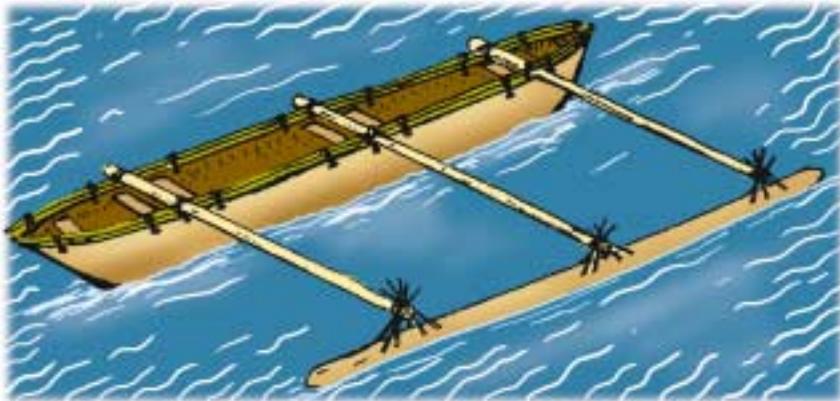
# Luaniua - Lord Howe Atoll

David Sokaika

## Key Words

*isolated, sighted, islet, inhabitants, Dutch, outrigger, atoll, adventurers, above sea level, to this day*

Luaniua is one of the isolated small island groups in Solomon Islands. It is often now known as Ontong Java, but is also called Lord Howe Atoll. It is an attractive boot-shaped atoll made up of 122 small islets. None of the islets are higher than 13 metres above sea level. The small islets surround a large lagoon.



The inhabitants of the islands are Polynesian. They are believed to have migrated from Tonga and Samoa many years before the first European explorers sighted the islands. They travelled long distances across the sea in outrigger canoes that are known as Vaa Hai Ama. To this day you can find outrigger canoes just like Vaa Hai Ama on many of the inhabited islets.



*Luaniua Atoll*

The first European discovery of this group of small islands was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February in 1567, Candlemas Day, when Alvaro de Mendana visited the island group. He re-named the group, *Los Bayos de la Candalaria*. In 1616, Dutch adventurers, Le Marie and Schouten, also sighted the islands. However, it was Abel Tasman, another Dutch explorer, who sighted the islands in 1642 and re-named them Ontong Java. He named them Ontong Java because the islands were similar to some islands near Java in Indonesia.

Later in 1791, John Hunter, an English explorer, became the first European to set foot on the islands. He re-named the group, Lord Howe Atoll after his patron, the famous Admiral Lord Howe.

The names, Ontong Java and Lord Howe, are still widely used today when people are referring to this island group. To the Polynesian inhabitants though, the Atoll will always keep its original name of Luaniua.

# **The Mystery of The Marie Celeste**

## **A true story retold by Alison Blaylock**

One of the greatest mysteries of the sea is the story of a sailing ship called the Marie Celeste.

The Marie Celeste set sail from New York on November 7<sup>th</sup> 1872. It was bound for Italy and carrying a full cargo. The captain, Benjamin Briggs, had with him his wife and his two-year-old daughter and a crew of seven men. As the ship set sail, no one could have guessed how this ordinary voyage would end.

Almost a month later, on December 5<sup>th</sup> another ship, the Dei Gratia, was also heading for Europe. Out in the Atlantic Ocean, the lookout sighted a ship.

“Ship on the starboard bow, Captain!” he called, alerting the captain to come on deck with his telescope. As the ship came into his view, the captain read the name on its side.

“It’s the Marie Celeste!” cried the Captain. “My old friend Benjamin Briggs is the captain. I shared dinner with him in New York the night before he sailed.”

He ordered the crew to fly a signal of welcome, and quickly they ran the flags up the mast to send their message to the Marie Celeste.

They stood on deck and waited for a reply to their signal, but were really puzzled when the ship just carried on sailing slowly past. The crew talked in whispers amongst themselves. “What was happening? Perhaps the two captains were not such good friends after all!” Then one of them noticed that, although the sails of the Marie Celeste were all up, they were not catching the wind.

Confused, the captain of the Dei Gratia called for his most powerful telescope and studied the Marie Celeste in silence for a long time. What he saw was a mystery!

There was no one at the wheel of the Marie Celeste. There was no lookout. In fact there was no sign of life on the ship at all. The captain immediately ordered the crew to turn the ship and sail towards the Marie Celeste. As they drew closer, the captain sent his first mate in a small boat to go and investigate what was happening aboard this strange vessel.



The mate rowed over to the ship and hauled himself up the side of the Marie Celeste. When he climbed aboard, he found the ship deserted. There was no one on the deck, no one in the cargo holds and no one in the crews quarters. There was not a single living person on the whole ship. Captain Briggs and his family and crew had simply disappeared.

Everything else on the ship was exactly as it should be. There was washing hanging dry on a washing line, and even a half finished meal on the captain's table. Next to the crew's beds there were shoes, personal belongings and their pipes and tobacco pouches. Even their wallets with their money still inside lay untouched in their lockers. The beds were neatly made and there was no sign of a struggle or fight anywhere on the ship.

The cargo was all safely stowed in the hold, as it had been when the ship had set out form New York. The only thing missing was a small boat.

On deck, the mate found a sword covered with brown stains, which he picked up and took back to the Dei Gratia.

The Marie Celeste was like a ghost ship. What had happened to her crew and passengers became the greatest mystery of the day.

Many theories were suggested to guess at what might have happened aboard this strange empty ship.

Had the crew all been washed overboard in a storm? This was possible but there had not been any reports of bad weather in the area, and there was nothing out of place on the ship to suggest a storm.

Had they all sailed off in the small boat? But if they had done so why would they leave their belongings and money behind on the ship? And why would they have left in the middle of a meal?

Had they been attacked by pirates and all murdered? This was possible, but then there was no evidence of a fight on board the ship and nothing was missing or stolen. What sort of pirates would kill the crew and leave without any reward? When they checked the brown stains on the sword found on deck they found they were not blood, but rust.

None of those who sailed on the Marie Celeste was ever seen again. Not a single clue was ever found to hint at the events that took place on that mysterious ship. Whatever the true story is remains one of the great secrets of the sea.

***Illustrations***

***by Jackson Onahikeni***

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**Nguzu Nguzu English**  
**Standard 5**

# Hagiama Island and other texts



Standard 5  
Reader 1