

The Hero Maui

A Reading A-Z Level T Leveled Book
Word Count: 1,143

LEVELED BOOK • T

The Hero Maui

Connections

Writing

Write an original myth about the demigod Maui that is true to his character and shows him using one or more of his special powers.

Social Studies

Choose a Polynesian island to research. Locate the island on a map and create a report about its geography and culture. Share your report with the class.

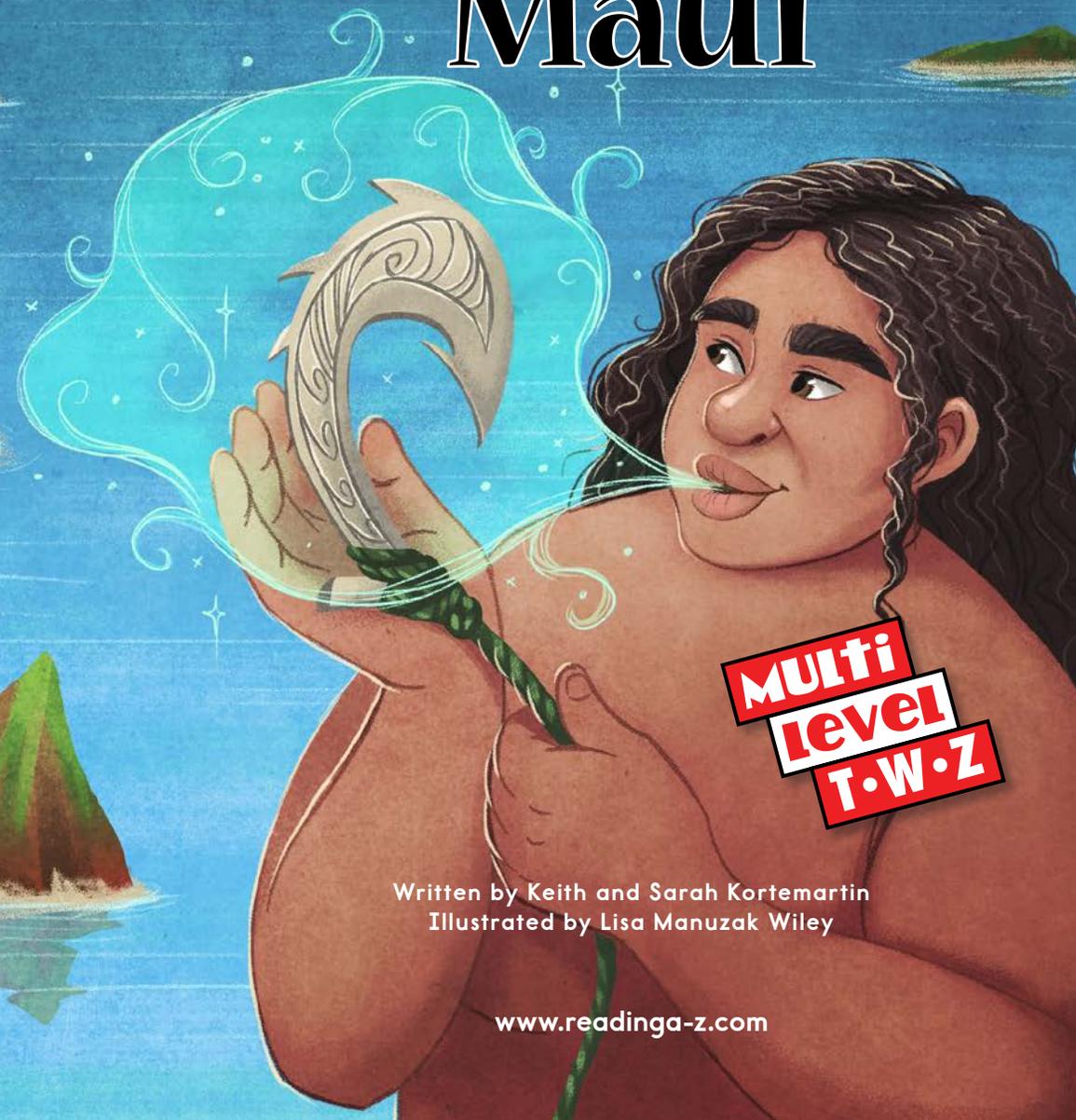
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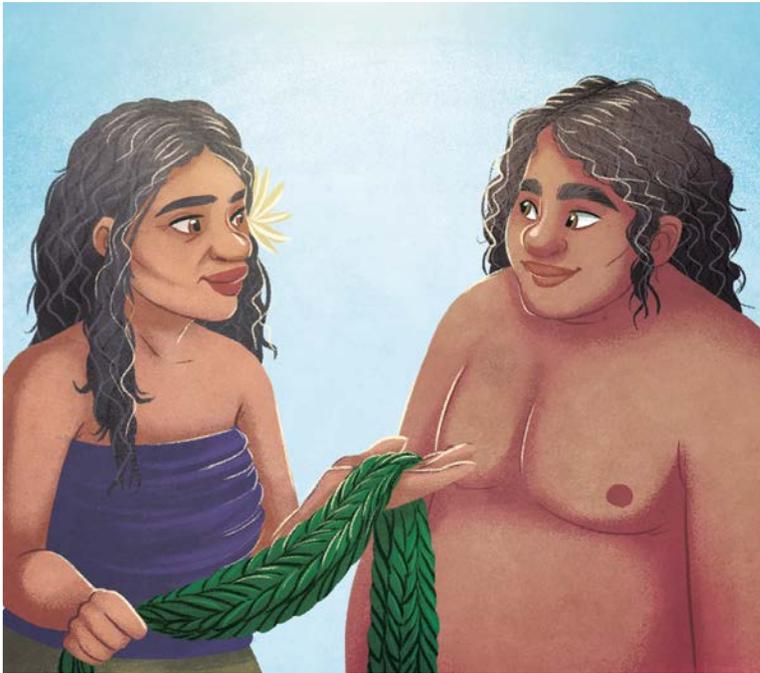
Written by Keith and Sarah Kortemartin
Illustrated by Lisa Manuzak Wiley

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level
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Focus Question

What makes Maui a hero?

Words to Know

canoe	immortality
cunning	mythical
demigod	Polynesians
devour	snare
generation	

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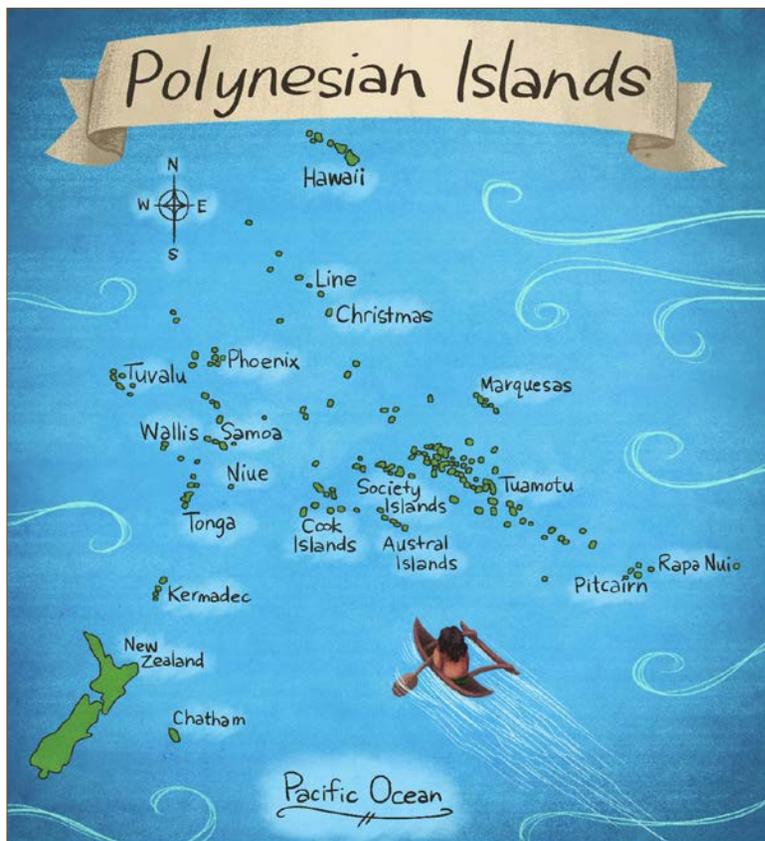
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Correlation

LEVEL T

Fountas & Pinnell	P
Reading Recovery	38
DRA	38

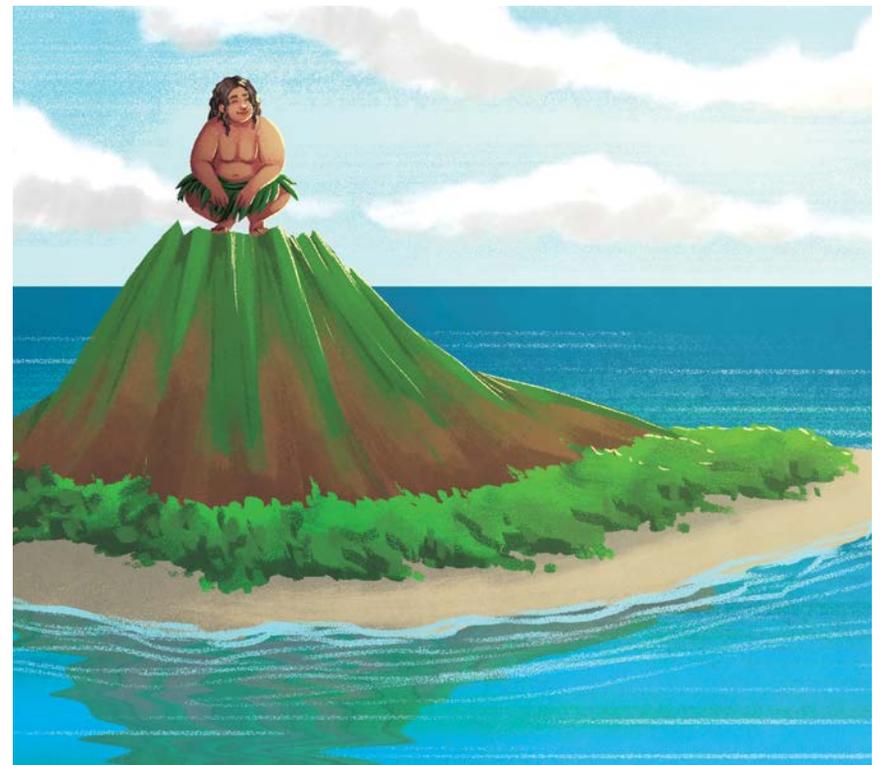


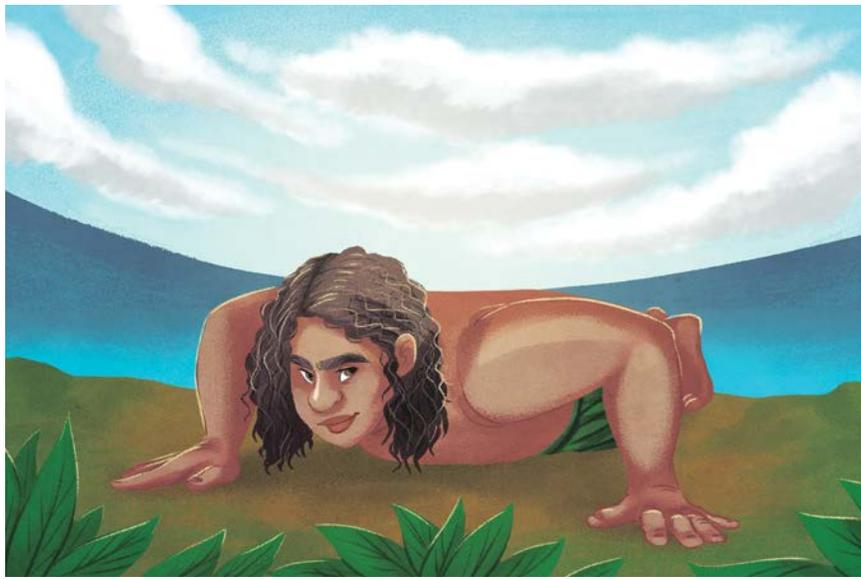
Hero of the Pacific

The **Polynesians** settled more than one thousand islands in the Pacific Ocean. Each island has its own traditions. However, one of the **mythical** figures common to all of Polynesia is the **demigod** Maui. Maui had supernatural powers of **cunning**, imagination, and strength. Here are a few of the stories that Polynesians have told all across the Pacific about the hero Maui.

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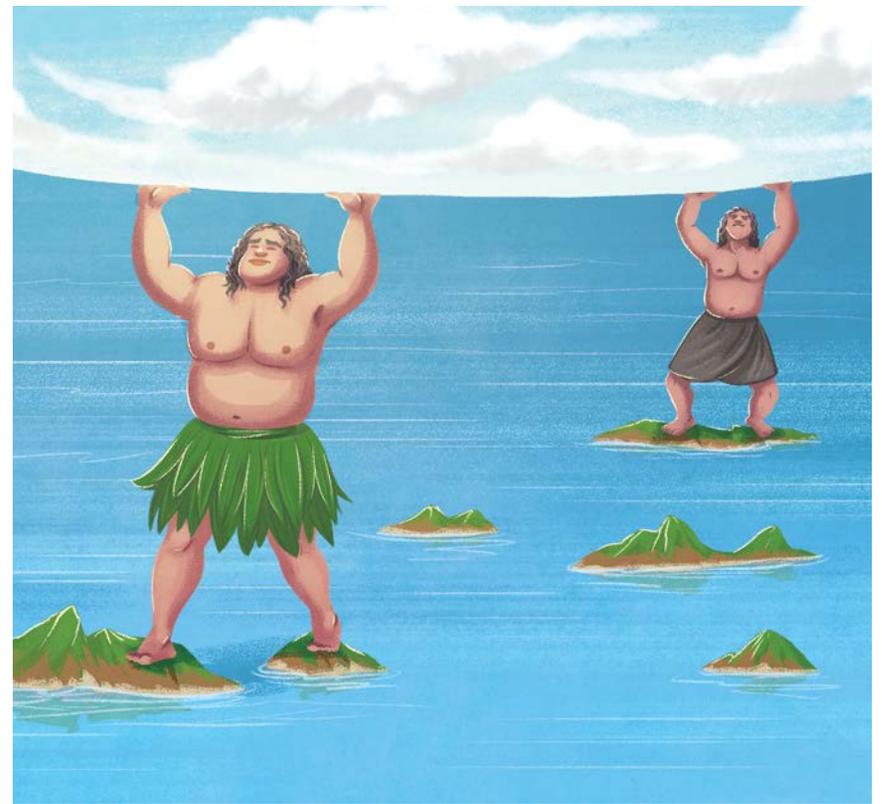




Maui Pushes Up the Sky

Long ago, the earth and the sky had not yet been separated, and people had to crawl from place to place. Maui decided to lift the sky into the heavens so that humans could move around freely. He went to the sky god, Ru, to request aid.

They agreed to travel far apart from one another. Then, on a signal, they both pushed the sky up at the same time. Their strength was enormous, and the sky began to move. Slowly, they pushed themselves into a crouching position. Then they stood with the sky resting on their shoulders.



Finally, Ru and Maui placed their hands under the sky, palms up. They stretched upward until they were taller than the tallest mountains. As they grew, the sky rose with them until it floated miles above the land.

Their achievement is still visible today as we look up at the perfect blue dome Ru and Maui created. Now people, plants, and animals can grow and move freely on the earth because of their efforts.

Maui Snares the Sun

The lifting of the sky created an unexpected problem. Suddenly the Sun had enough space to run across it very quickly.

This caused great suffering for humankind, as the days became very short. Plants could not grow, fruits could not ripen, and the nights were long and cold.

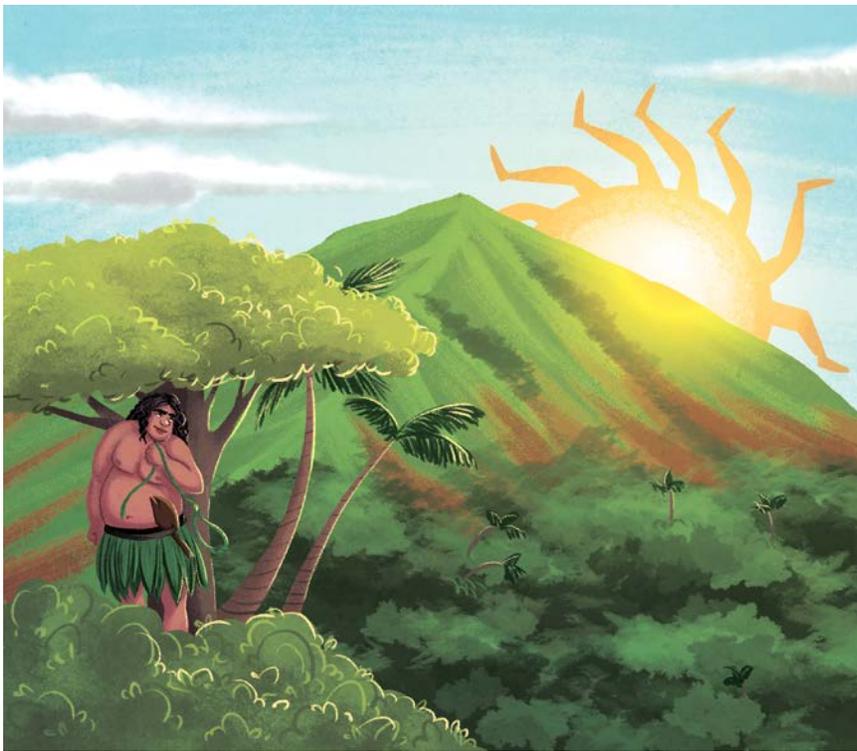
Maui's mother and grandmother were particularly unhappy, and they begged Maui to help. Maui promised to do what he could. He noticed that the Sun had sixteen legs, which let him run very quickly. Maui reasoned that if he could **snare** those legs, he could stop the Sun in his tracks and bargain with him.



Maui's mother and grandmother approved of this plan, and they gave him sixteen ropes made of strong vines. They also gave him a magic war axe. Finally, they told Maui to hide underneath a tree at the top of a mountain.

"From there," said his grandmother, "you will be able to see the Sun as he comes up. When his first leg creeps over the horizon, throw your first rope, catch his leg, and tie the rope to the tree. Do this as each of his legs comes up, and you will trap him."





Before dawn the next morning, Maui hid under a tree at the top of a tall mountain. Before long, the Sun's first leg appeared on the horizon, and Maui threw his rope and caught it. He fastened the rope to the tree and waited for the second leg to appear.

The Sun soon realized what was happening and tried to flee. But Maui, using the ropes, dragged him back and threatened him with the war axe. The Sun was terrified and begged Maui to set him free.



"I will do no such thing," Maui said, "until we make a deal." And he described all the troubles the Sun's rapid progress across the sky had made for humankind: how the people could not cook, work, or pray because the days were so short.

The Sun accepted everything Maui said, and soon they had a bargain. Maui agreed to allow the Sun to travel quickly across the sky in winter. But in summer, the Sun would travel slowly so that the days would be long and crops could grow.

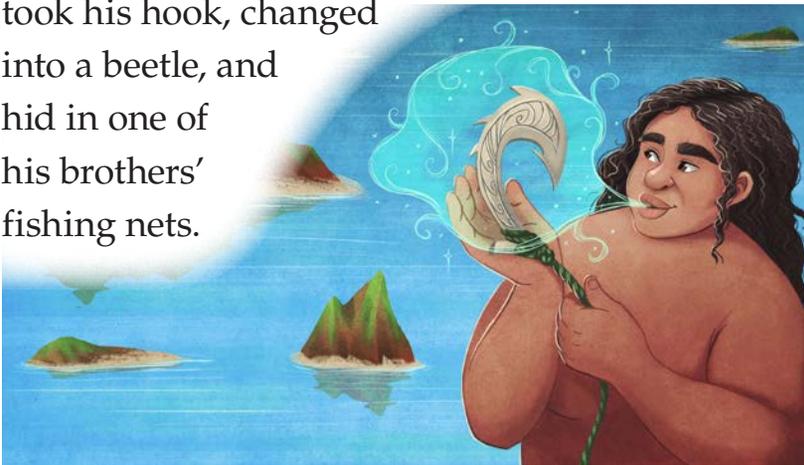
Thus Maui snared the Sun and created the seasons we have today.

Maui Pulls Up the Islands

Maui loved to play tricks. When he and his brothers went out fishing, for example, his brothers worked hard to catch fish. Somehow, however, the fish always wound up in Maui's net.

Finally, Maui's brothers refused to take him fishing any longer. Maui realized that he would have to prove his worth to his brothers. He decided to make a new fishing hook that could catch the greatest fish in the world.

Maui worked for days and made a huge fishing hook from a sharp bone and a twisted vine. He also breathed some of his own magic power into it. When he was finished, Maui took his hook, changed into a beetle, and hid in one of his brothers' fishing nets.



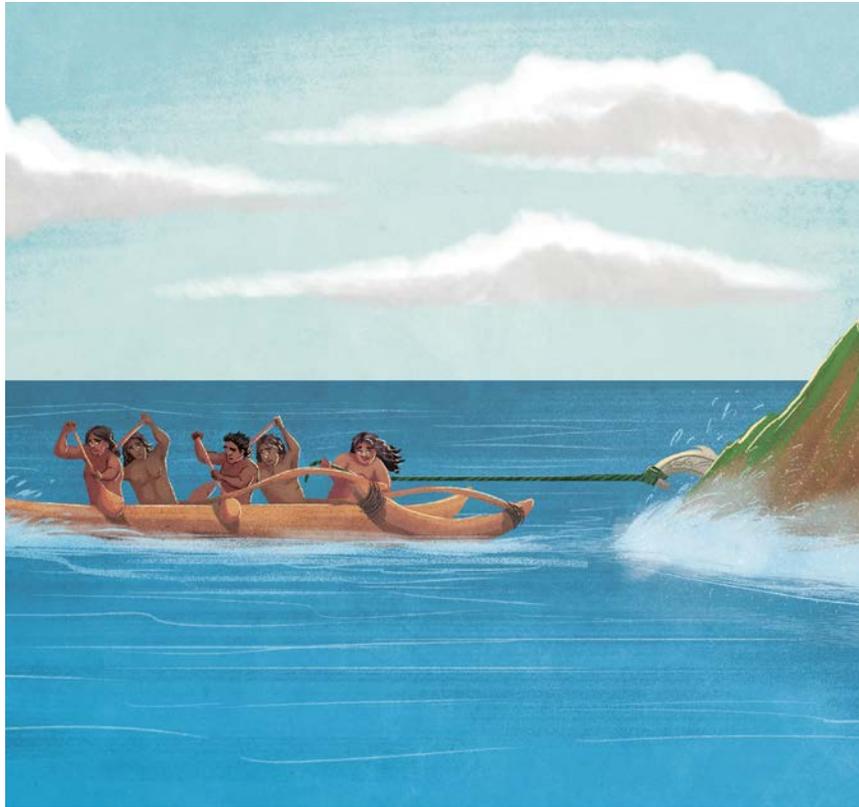
As soon as they were far out to sea, Maui changed back into his normal shape. His brothers were not pleased, but Maui said, "If you take me to the deepest parts of the ocean, I will show you the greatest fish in the sea."

His brothers grumbled, but rather than listen to Maui's arguments, they decided to grant his request. They paddled far out to sea, and Maui cast out his magic hook and fishing line.

Suddenly there was a strong pull on the line. "Paddle!" Maui cried to his brothers. "Keep the line tight! We will bring in this great fish together."

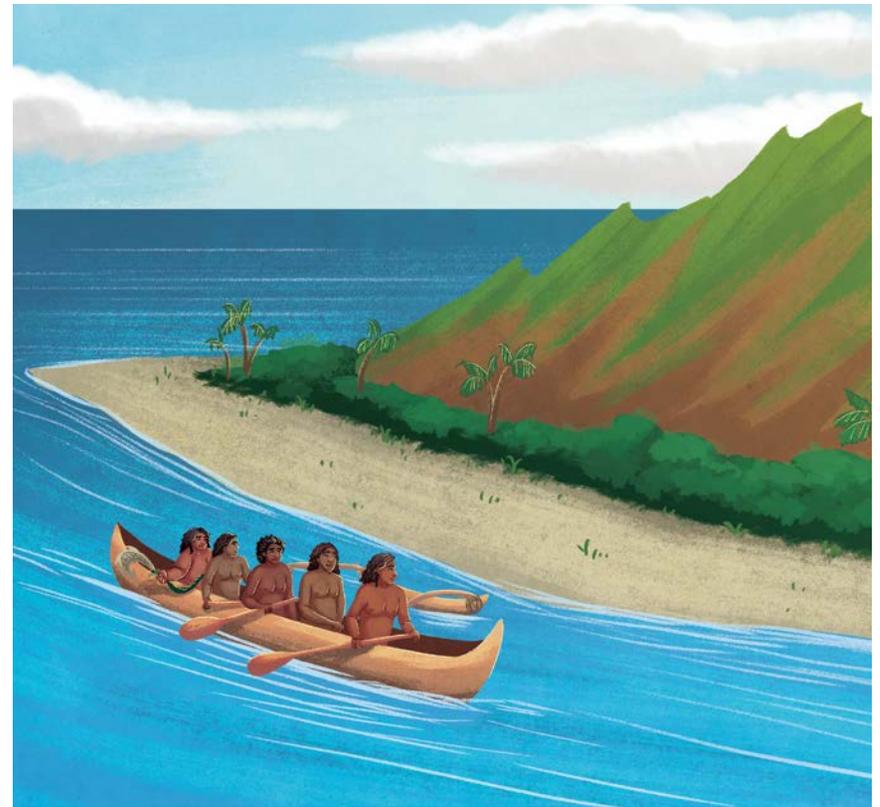
Maui's brothers paddled with all their might, for they were eager to see what he had caught.

Finally they could hear something splashing up through the waves behind the **canoe**. One of Maui's brothers looked back and screamed, horrified. He saw an enormous island rising behind them, caught on Maui's magic fishing hook. It looked like a monstrous fish about to **devour** them all.



Maui gave one final heave and cast the line free, settling the island into place. Suddenly, the brothers found that they were paddling in shallow water next to a beach. Exhausted, they rested on their oars. Everyone looked up in wonder at the island that Maui had pulled out of the ocean.

That is how the hero Maui lifted the Pacific Islands out of the sea.



Maui Defeated

Maui gave humankind many gifts, including the gift of summer, the gift of the islands, and the gift of the sky. But he was not able to give humans the gift of **immortality**.

Maui believed that it was not right that people should die. He decided to steal the secret of immortality from Hine (HEE-nay), the goddess who kept the secret to immortal life in her heart. Maui knew that the only way to steal the secret was to steal Hine's heart.

Maui approached Hine while she was sleeping and dived into her open mouth. He found Hine's heart and nearly escaped with it. But Hine woke just as he was trying to come out of her mouth again. She caught Maui in her teeth and killed him.

Maui was not successful in giving humankind the gift of immortality, but humans remember him and honor him for the attempt. In this way, the hero Maui survives as the stories about him are passed down from **generation** to generation.

Glossary

canoe (<i>n.</i>)	a narrow boat that is pointed at both ends and is moved by paddling (p. 13)
cunning (<i>n.</i>)	cleverness or deceit used to trick others (p. 4)
demigod (<i>n.</i>)	a being from mythology who is part human and part god (p. 4)
devour (<i>v.</i>)	to eat quickly or greedily (p. 13)
generation (<i>n.</i>)	all the people or other living things that are born and live at about the same time (p. 15)
immortality (<i>n.</i>)	the state of living or being remembered forever (p. 15)
mythical (<i>adj.</i>)	of or relating to a myth or folktale; imaginary or idealized (p. 4)
Polynesians (<i>n.</i>)	people from ethnic groups native to many islands in the Pacific Ocean (p. 4)
snare (<i>v.</i>)	to catch an animal with a trap (p. 7)