

FIFTY: The Stars, the States, and the Stories

All Story Descriptions

The United States of America is a magnificent experiment. It is a nation built on a dream of a better future, on equality, and on true freedom. But what does that really look like?

In this collection of stories, we learn about the American Experiment through the experience of “regular folk” — one from each state, plus every district and territory. Rebels, industrialists, foresters, farmers, and immigrants from every corner of the planet and Native folk who have been here for a very long time – we will meet them all in a moment of true citizenship: when they make the American Experiment their own.

A note for all the stories — these stories are all historical fiction — pulling from real historical and biographical facts — but “sparkled” into a narrative that engages and inspires. Though this is historical fiction and the characters have been developed to accommodate a story, their attributes and development may be useful as reference points and inspirations.



Collection One:

Collection One contains the following states: Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island

Delaware: People Like Me

Richard Heath, administrator for the Quaker businessman William Penn, was set with the grueling task of delivering notices to anyone who was living on land now owned by his employer. When he encounters Old Hannu, a "Forest Finn," and his Lenape-Dutch grand-daughter, his idea of "land ownership" is fundamentally challenged.

Pennsylvania: Three Men and a Bell

On September 16, 1777, three men — a sociable young Mennonite farmer, a seasoned old doorman of poor health, and an injured African-American carpenter — were given the grand task of hiding a uniquely symbolic ... bell. This bell, which would one day be called the “Liberty Bell,” was big, heavy, and currently at the top of the Pennsylvania statehouse — and they had three days to get it out of town.

New Jersey: Miss Barton's Free School

Clara Barton wanted to teach all children — not just the children from families that could afford to pay her. So when she learned of the “Free School” movement where state and local governments paid for school rather than the individual families, she saw her future. With hard work and perseverance, she was able to create the first Free School in New Jersey — and much to everyone’s surprise, it was a huge success. This victory, however, eventually led to Miss Barton’s removal and sent her on an entirely new trajectory: to form the American Red Cross.

Georgia: All in Translation

James Oglethorpe had an idea: he wanted to reform the debtor’s prison system in England by establishing a new colony in America called "Georgia." The only problem was that the current residents of the "new land" were members of the Yamacraw tribe and he did not speak their language. Luckily he met Mary Musgrove, who not only could translate, but gave him invaluable advice that helped both Oglethorpe and the Yamacraw people.

Connecticut: My Daughter Can

In 1777, two years after Paul Revere made his historic evening ride to Concord, Massachusetts, 16-year-old Sybil Ludington had a similar experience — though hers was twice as long, took all night, and was during a terrible storm. Her ride was to alert patriot farmers to gather at her father’s home where they would set off the following morning to defend Danbury, Connecticut from the British army.

Massachusetts: The Power of Thanksgiving

The Thanksgiving story of the Pilgrims and Native Americans is told year after year — and at its center is a famous man commonly called Squanto. He is remembered as the great translator and teacher who helped the European pilgrims survive in their new home near Plymouth rock. But the true story of Tisquantum (his real name) is, of course, much more complex, personal, and relatable. It is a story of tragedy, of adventure, and of an opportunity to heal.

Parent Note: Our historical fiction version of his story includes the reality of Native American slavery, the plague of smallpox, and his personal grief around losing his family. Yes, this story includes difficult topics and themes that are not usually shared over the Thanksgiving meal, but it also includes reconciliation, service, and ultimately ... deep healing.

Maryland: The Test Oath

America has had some strange laws in the past that have, without question, benefited some populations over others. The Maryland “Test Oath” was one of them. When Solomon Etting moved to Baltimore, Maryland, the Revolutionary War was over and he was ready to begin his life anew. He remarried, started a new business, and when the time seemed right, he considered running for office. And that was when he learned of the “Test Oath” — an oath that required candidates to swear their dedication to the Christian church before running. That was fine for Solomon’s Christian friends — but Solomon was Jewish. What to do?

South Carolina: An Experiment in Freedom

When the Union Army takes control of Hilton Head Island off the coast of South Carolina, they have the challenge of addressing the group of over 1,000 freed slaves that remained behind. General Mitchel proposes that they form their own town — governed and run by the ex-slaves themselves. This is a bold move, to be sure, but one that brings with it surprising success.

New Hampshire: A Meeting On the Green

“A Meeting on the Green” is historical fiction that takes place in Keene, New Hampshire two days after the "shots heard round the world" of the Battle of Lexington and the official beginning of the American Revolutionary War.

The story focuses on the relationship between two best friends, Abitha and Ester, and how the Battle of Lexington creates a temporary rift between them. Ester's father is a patriot, or a part of the growing number of American colonists who wish for independence. Abitha's father, however, leans toward being a loyalist, or someone who wishes to remain a part of the British government. When 29 Keene men volunteer to march to Boston to fight — and Ester's father is counted among them — Ester takes out her upset on her friend.

It is a story that frames the Revolutionary war through a lens that is often forgotten: that Americans were not in agreement around claiming their independence. And it asks the question, "How can one be a loyal friend to someone AND disagree with them on fundamental questions?"

Virginia: Twigs and Trees

When Lizzie Walker tries to stay home from school one morning, she learns from her grandmother the value of creating big change by starting small and simple. Her grandmother, Maggie Lena Walker, knows this from her own experiences as the first woman ever to charter an independent bank in America, and Maggie learned this lesson from her own mother, a former slave who provided for her children by washing clothes for the wealthy families of Richmond. Lizzie is impressed and inspired and imagines a way in which she can benefit her community by starting with something small.

New York: All Have Our Part

Biddy is the twin daughter of two Northern Irish immigrants who came to America and were met with immediate prejudice and racism. They persevered and eventually purchased and managed their own Erie Canal “packet boat,” but then became prejudiced and racist in their own way against Italian, Chinese, and Jewish people. Biddy then becomes the catalyst for empathy, education, and connection.

Note: Though this story is historical fiction and includes the hard realities of racism, we still believe it is appropriate for children age 8+. It shows that racism, no matter how ingrained, can be overcome when people from different backgrounds find a connection.

North Carolina: You Are Not Your Father

When Levi Boyd learns who his father is, he is flooded with many emotions. He is shocked because he is learning this from his friends rather than his mother. He is angry because his mother never told him the whole truth. And he is ashamed because it turns out that his father — a man he never met — was the notorious pirate Blackbeard.

Rhode Island: The Cohan Family Mirth Makers

The story of George M. Cohan tends to focus on the ambition, drive, and dedication of the young actor, director, and producer — but his family’s start in Providence, Rhode Island holds a special place in the history of American entertainment. His father, Jerry Cohan was born in Ireland and emigrated to Boston to become a harness maker. It wasn’t long before he took a risk and focused all his efforts on joining the burgeoning world of vaudeville entertainment. He met his wife and the two of them started a family act that would become popular in all of New England.



Collection Two:

Collection Two contains the following states: Vermont, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, Mississippi, Illinois, Alabama, Maine, Missouri, Arkansas

Vermont: The Gift of the Dragon

H.S. Robinson, a young cheese factory mechanic from Rome, New York, decides one day to fulfill his dream of hunting a real-life monster. In this case, it is the Lake Champlain monster, “Champy” — a legendary sea dragon that is rumored to reflect back whatever you bring to the lake. For some it is pride, for others it is conquest — and for H.S., it turns out to be love.

Kentucky: Electrification

Mildred Watkins Chandler, wife of Kentucky governor Happy Chandler, is hesitant about one of the big initiatives her husband is spearheading: bringing electricity to rural farms. She understands the benefits, but wonders if anyone is considering the costs: What do we give up when we increase speed, productivity, and efficiency? Lucky for her, one of those rural farmers feels the same way.

Tennessee: One of Us

When a reporter suggested to Roy Acuff, the famous country musician and Grand Ole Opry regular, that he run for governor in opposition to the popular Democratic candidate, Roy thought he was joking. Soon after, to everyone’s surprise, he was backed by the Republican party and was touring the state as its nominee. Though he lost that election, he continued to think Tennesseans deserved a leader that was more like the common people. Years later, Roy Acuff found himself introducing the President of the United States to a room full of country music fans — a man who he considered to be “one of us.”

Ohio: The View from Above

Blanche Noyes was the first woman to get her pilot's license in Ohio. She placed fourth in the world-famous Women's Air Derby — right behind Amelia Earhart. Now, she flies a private Ford Trimotor airplane for Standard Oil of Ohio, spending most of her days waiting for the rich and powerful to board her aircraft. This day seems no different, until she learns who her passenger will be: none other than the richest man in the world, John D. Rockefeller. What is he doing in Cleveland and why does he want to fly in her aircraft? When the 90-year-old insists on taking his first and only flight in the cockpit, Blanche and John D. have a chance to talk — and they realize they actually have a lot in common.

Louisiana: Gumbo and the Petticoat Insurrection

When Ambroisine Melange arrived in the French colony of Louisiana, she was immediately disappointed. Where were the beautiful buildings? Where were the gardens filled with vegetables? Where were the handsome men she had been promised? But what proved to be the most disappointing of all was the food — nothing but corn mush when she had been promised the most delicious French cuisine. But when Madame Langlois stepped out onto the Governor's porch, she presented something that turned Ambroisine's experience upside down — a delicious stew that was called ... gumbo.

Indiana: Geodes and Gnomes

Miriam loves her rock collection like other children might love their pet mouse or stuffed animals. She talks to them and takes good care of them and, remarkably, they talk back to her — or at least the rock fairies do. Their friendship comes in handy when Miriam's Uncle Jack, a geologist at Indiana University, is asked to study an area in central Indiana where a road is being planned. He brings Miriam along — and lucky for him, she is able to let him know some very important geological information about a nearby mountain.

Mississippi: Boll Weevil and the Blues

Chester Arthur Burnett left his mother's home in the Mississippi Delta because he had had enough. His self-righteous and downright mean uncle caught him humming a tune that he had overheard one of the sharecroppers singing — and he called it "the devil's music." Chester knew it wasn't the devil's music, and he wanted to know more about what this music really was. So he went barefoot nearly a hundred miles to his father's home where he met two men that would introduce him to this music — and his own destiny.

Illinois: Crossing the River

Drusilla Hendricks had a particularly challenging voyage ahead of her. Her husband was wounded and her children were hungry — and the sudden Mormon exodus from Missouri needed to take place in the winter. When she and her family came to the western edge of the Mississippi, she saw that although the river was still frozen, the ice might be too thin to cross safely. What should they do?

Alabama: It Is Rocket Science

Pat McCauley, a novice reporter for the Huntsville Times, is finally entrusted with a real scoop: an ex-Nazi scientist who is now working for the U.S. government wants to talk to the press. Pat is thrilled

and makes arrangements to meet with the mysterious man, but he's not prepared for the scope of the conversation and what this means for the future of American Rocket Science.

Maine: From the Ashes

Hannah Thorlo's hometown of Portland, Maine burned to the ground twice in her lifetime. The first time occurred when she was one month old and the British Navy burned the town as punishment for their participation in the Revolutionary War. The second time happened 91 years later, during a celebration of the first Independence Day after the Civil War. Both times, Hannah was carried out of her house to safety. And both times her hometown built itself back up out of the ashes.

Missouri: The Rainbow Bridge

Miss Powell loves her hometown of Saint Louis, Missouri and it troubles her to see it in apparent decline. When she hears a proposal from a local councilman to build a monument near the historic courthouse, she is determined to lend a hand. She enrolls the class of 1931 to draw pictures of possible monuments — with the hope of seeing the future of their city in these sketches — and the result is not only profound but remarkably accurate!

Arkansas: Throwing Curve Balls

During a minor league baseball game in 1920, Dee Brown meets two important Native American figures: a famous Pawnee baseball pitcher for the Arkansas Travelers named Moses Yellow Horse, and a young Creek boy named William Brown. Dee is so impressed and surprised by them both that many years later he writes "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee," a novel about Western Expansionism from the perspective of Native Americans.



Collection Three:

Collection Three contains the following states: Michigan, Florida, Texas, Iowa, Wisconsin, California, Minnesota, Oregon, Kansas, West Virginia, Nevada, Nebraska, and Colorado.

Michigan: The Gotham Hotel

In 1959 there was only one fancy hotel in the country that was owned, run, and patronized by African-Americans: The Gotham Hotel. It was not only where Ella Fitzgerald, Sammy Davis Jr., Billie Holiday, Joe Lewis, and Cab Calloway stayed when visiting Detroit, but it was also the place where Langston Hughes, C.L. Franklin, and Martin Luther King Jr. expressed the "dream" of what America could be — a "promised land" where everyone truly is equal.

Florida: Of Paradise and Peril

"Of Paradise and Peril" is Civil War era historical fiction about the meeting of two men in what is now known as Tampa Bay, Florida. One man, Wade P. Hood, is a sailor from a southern barricade runner (small steamboat) who falls from his boat and swims to shore. The other man, Count Odet Philipi, is a

Black Frenchman who has built Florida's first grapefruit orchard, and is now a proud, successful southern businessman during a time when southern businesses are all struggling. Count Odet cares for Wade and helps him return to his native Alabama, but the Frenchman also offers strong opinions on the nature of war, of integrity, and of business.

Texas: Natural Beauty

During World War II, a German POW is taken to Marfa, Texas where he will stay until the war is over. At first he is confused by the wide open plains, distant mountains, and tumbleweeds of West Texas, but it doesn't take him long to appreciate the air, the climate, the colors, and the delicious food of this part of the world. In time he decides to honor his temporary home by painting some murals depicting the Latino-American culture of the area — murals that can be seen in Marfa to this day.

Iowa: The Farmer's Holiday

Milo Reno and his wife, Christine, watched a fancy new car from the bank pass by their farmhouse and they both knew where it was headed: to deliver a foreclosure notice to a neighboring farm. As he remembered how Iowa farmers joined together to feed the troops in World War I, he got an idea — an idea that would reunite farmers once again and remind the government and banks just how important farmers are.

Wisconsin: Love Finds You

Juliet McGill needs to make a decision: should she go against her wealthy New York family's request and marry a Wisconsin Territory fur trader and Indian agent? Or should she return home and find someone "better suited" to her place in society? Her decision is made when she hears a story about a Native American woman named Glory of the Morning and her unlikely suitor.

California: Following Your Friends

In the spring of 1942, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Ralph Lazo's Japanese American friends are told to leave their Los Angeles homes and move to an internment camp for the duration of the war. Ralph, who is Mexican American, decides to protest the policy by joining Manzanar and remaining with his friends. There he not only sees the uncomfortable conditions of the camp, but he meets some incredible people.

Minnesota: This House

When Louise Wahinoge moves her family to a small city outside of St. Paul, she purchases a house that has a long and powerful history. Not only is the house where the famous Mayo Clinic was founded, but it is also connected to one of America's most famous food companies. This information comes to Louise in a most remarkable and magical series of accidents.

Oregon: We Will Vote

It is the final stretch for Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in their cross-continental exploration of the Louisiana Purchase. Morale and rations are low and a decision needs to be made — should they stay put

on the north shore of the Columbia River, travel west along the river, or cross the river to the south shore? Each of the choices has benefits and challenges — and Meriwether Lewis isn't sure which to choose. That is, until he proposes that every member of the party vote.

Kansas: The Rivalry

In the states of Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri, high school and college football is very important to many families. This is especially the case for the Berrafato family — and it is football that not only brings the family together, but later creates the biggest rift. When Tony Berrafato joins the Kansas Jayhawks football program and his younger brother, Nicky, joins the Missouri Tigers team, they learn how deep a football rivalry can go.

This story references a civil war rift between Kansas and Missouri and the violent conflict that forms between “slave states” and “free states.”

West Virginia: Follow Your Own Noon

John Nash and his sister, Martha, were very different. Where Martha was sociable, funny, and engaging, John was solitary, curious, and awkward. The people of Bluefield, West Virginia wondered if there was something wrong with John, but his mother paid no attention. She knew that he actually had extraordinary gifts yet to be manifest — and she was right. All the awkward interactions John had experienced in his youth would translate one day into an elegant mathematical theory that would win him a Nobel Prize.

Nevada: The Telegram

James H. Guild has a unique challenge: his telegraph company has been asked by the governor of Nevada Territory to send the longest telegram ever sent — over 250 pages of text! He agrees to the task, but knows that the only two operators that can handle that amount of work ... can't stand each other. One is a Republican and the other is a Democrat during one of the most contentious elections in American history: Lincoln vs. McClellan. And the fate of the union rests on them getting the job done.

Nebraska: The Omaha Claim Club

Gertrude Wiley was fed up with the Omaha Claim Club. She understood its benefits and origins, but in 1860 it looked more like a handful of greedy rich men who wanted to keep everything for themselves than an organization that cared for the community. She generally tolerated their oppressive ways — until her nephew became their target and Gertrude stepped forward and refused to be intimidated.

Colorado: One Hundred and One Nights

Lester Clark, his wife, Allison, and their twin daughters are adventurous folk. Between his imagination and gift of storytelling and her fortitude and organization, they have what it takes to leave England, move to America, and start a successful tailoring business. But when they get the bug to explore the Wild West of Mexican Colorado, they need every skill and resource they can muster to survive — let alone succeed.



Collection Four:

Collection Four contains the following states: North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, Alaska, and Hawaii

North Dakota: Snow Dancing

Olav Nelson hates winter — at least compared to summer. As far as he is concerned, there is nothing to do in North Dakota in the winter other than sit in the sod house and wait for the thaw. But then Sondre Norheim, an old Norwegian from across the river, visits. He shows the Nelsons why he loves winter and looks forward to it all year long — because of a sport and form of travel that requires the cold and snow. And it’s called “skiing.”

South Dakota: Trying to Do Some Good

Most people have heard of the rough-and-tumble Wild West character Calamity Jane and her gun-toting, hard-talking, men’s-clothes-wearing reputation. But like many of the larger-than-life heroes and villains of the American West, the truth is much more subtle and complicated. For when an outbreak of smallpox threatens the gold rush town of Deadwood, South Dakota, it is not the doctor, or the marshal, or even the care-taking women of the town that step forward to help, but Calamity Jane, who sacrifices her own safety to be of service.

Montana: The Marriage Bar

Jenny Bell Maynard seemed to have created the perfect life. She was now living where she had always wanted to live — in her hometown of Horse Plains, Montana. She was doing what she always wanted to do — teaching elementary school in the one-room schoolhouse where she had once been a student. And she had just met the love of her life and was engaged to be married. There was one thing, however, that could potentially unravel it all: the Montana Marriage Bar. This was an old rule that stated only single women could legally teach in the state due to unfair reasoning that married women no longer need an income. Luckily, she and her husband were able to create a plan that would allow them to marry while letting Jenny keep her job. But it came with consequences...

Washington: Follow the Morning

Follow-the-Sun, a woman from the Spokane tribe of eastern Washington, overhears that the United States has declared war on the English — and that the English have dispatched several ships to overtake fur trading forts at the mouth of the Columbia River. This is concerning for many reasons, but she is most worried about her husband, a Canadian trader currently stationed at one of those forts. She takes it upon herself to travel hundreds of miles along the Columbia River to warn him — and along the way, she sees some of the most diverse and beautiful country in the world.

Idaho: A Brave Day Indeed

“A Brave Day Indeed” is historical fiction about a railroad town called “Sandy Point” (later became Sandpoint) and a conversation between Wild Horse Tavern owner, Delia Horton, and future President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt. They share parts of their biography and the conversation then turns to how to handle bullies who try to stand in your way. The “brave day” that Theodore refers to is from his youth when he followed his father’s advice to “make himself” and face personal challenges that arise on his first day of summer camp.

Wyoming: The Golden Rule

One of the most famous department stores in American history started off in a small coal mining town in Wyoming. The “Golden Rule Stores” were developed and expanded by James Cash Penney and built on the idea that customer service was the most important part of business, and the belief that the staff must always treat people the way they want to be treated. And the idea worked!

Utah: Eyes of the Earth

Chu Yun and Lu Yun arrived in San Francisco in 1868 with something of a plan: Chu would get a job as a geologist for the railroad and his daughter, Lu — well, that was unclear. But when the railroad hiring office made it clear that Chu would only be hired as a laborer, Lu then knew exactly what she would do: pretend to be a man and join her father. They were then assigned to a very important section of the railroad in Promontory, Utah — the section where the Transcontinental Railroad would be completed.

Oklahoma: Migrant Mother

The photograph that is most associated with the 1930s dust bowl of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas is the iconic “Migrant Mother,” photographed by Dorothea Lange. The subject of the photograph is Florence Owens Thompson, mother of seven who was stranded at the time on her way to California. This story is based on her real-life journey and what it meant to do whatever was needed to not only survive during a national crisis ... but to make the most of any situation.

New Mexico: Running for the Rebellion

Tago is a Taos Pueblo “runner” who is charged with delivering a cord with numbered knots to the leaders of various Pueblos on the Camino Real trail, along the Rio Grande River. The knots count how many days until a revolt against Spain officially begins. The San Juan medicine man, Pope, coordinates the rebellion and is considered the leader, for a time, of all Pueblo people.

This story is a fictional account of the “Pueblo Revolt” that took place in New Mexico in August of 1680. The revolt was against the colonists of Spain who came looking for gold and silver but stayed to ranch and build Christian missions. The “Pueblo Revolt” is considered the most successful Native American rebellion against European colonists.

Arizona: Finding Planet X

Wealthy businessman, mathematician, and author Percival Lowell, dedicated the last years of his life and most of his personal riches to one mission: to find the mysterious “Planet X” — the supposed ninth planet in the solar system. His singular focus created the facility and calculations that would accomplish this goal, but it was the diligence and can-do practicality of a Kansas farm boy who would actually make Lowell’s dream come true.

Alaska: A Mountain to Conquer

When 14-year-old Ephem Kalmakoff reaches the top of Marathon Mountain and peers out over the thick Alaskan fog, he is suddenly reminded of three stories he heard when he was five years old: one from his Aleut grandmother, one from the Russian Orthodox priest of Anaslaska Island, and one from the teacher in the Methodist home for orphaned boys. These three stories fill him with a sense of history, identity, and finally mission — the mission to win the race.

Hawaii: The Queens

When Prince Iolani learned that his father, the great King Kamehameha, had died, he wanted to sail away from his responsibilities. He did not want to be king. He did not want to think about war and law and strategy and trade. He just wanted to go sailing and enjoy his life, like he had been doing for the past 22 years. Lucky for him, two of his father’s queens, his mother and his teacher, offer to help him lead the newly formed Kingdom of Hawaii. However, they need him to do something first: destroy the Kapu — the age-old code of behavior that severely restricted the rights of women. Iolani does not know what to do, so he goes sailing to help him make a decision that would change the kingdom forever.



American Territories and Washington DC:

Washington DC: The Dress

For reasons that were unclear, First Lady Dolley Payne Madison had a strong connection to the velvet drapes in the White House Oval Drawing Room. She pushed for them to be used even when the official decorator balked. She saved them right before the White House was burned down by the English in the War of 1812. And then, years later, she transformed them into something very unique and special. Many people wondered why she gave the drapes so much attention — but her niece, Anna, knew the reason. And it was something far more important than people realized.

Puerto Rico: Hoy Vieques

While the rest of her family protests at the Navy base, Esperanza and her grandfather take a day trip to northern Vieques, the small island off the coast of Puerto Rico, to see the old Ceiba tree. Esperanza’s grandfather tells her that the tree had a special message for him many years ago, and when she finally sees the tree and sits between its immense roots, she learns what the tree has to say to her as well.

Guam: The Radioman

In 1941, the Japanese forces took control of the U.S. territory in Guam and most of the U.S. citizens escaped. Six soldiers, however, were left behind. Two-and-a-half years later, only one had successfully managed to escape capture: George Tweed, the radioman. The reason for his success included good hiding spots and his intimate knowledge of electronics — but the biggest source of support came from the people of Guam who risked their lives to keep him safe.

American Virgin Islands: The Teacher and the King

David Hamilton Jackson longed for justice and equality in his island home but was thwarted at every turn by a government he believed to be unsympathetic. One day, he received a summons to visit the ruling government officials and is surprised to learn that this is not a rebuke ... but a request for help.

American Samoa: Where Important Things Live

Although Elei loves her family and wants to honor their wish that she become a nurse, she has other ambitions she'd like to follow. But when she meets the teacher of her first humanities class, Culture of Polynesia, she sees her own Samoan culture in a new light, embracing her experience of the “in between” — and ultimately finding opportunities for herself that she had thought would be just a dream.

Note for Parents: Elei is what the Samoan people call a “Fa’afafine” or third gender. This occurs predominantly when someone born with a male body identifies as neither traditionally male nor female, but sees themselves as “in between.” Though this is a common and accepted identity in Samoa and most of Polynesia, we recognize that parents may wish to introduce concepts of “third gender” or “transgender” independently.

Northern Mariana Islands: What's Ours Is Yours (and What's Yours Is Ours)

When Vasco joins the crew of Ferdinand Magellan's mission to discover a clear route to the Spice Islands, he counts himself lucky to have joined such a respected crew. But as the mission progresses to the Northern Mariana Islands, it becomes clear that the crew members are the lucky ones who benefit from the unique interpersonal skills this young man offers.