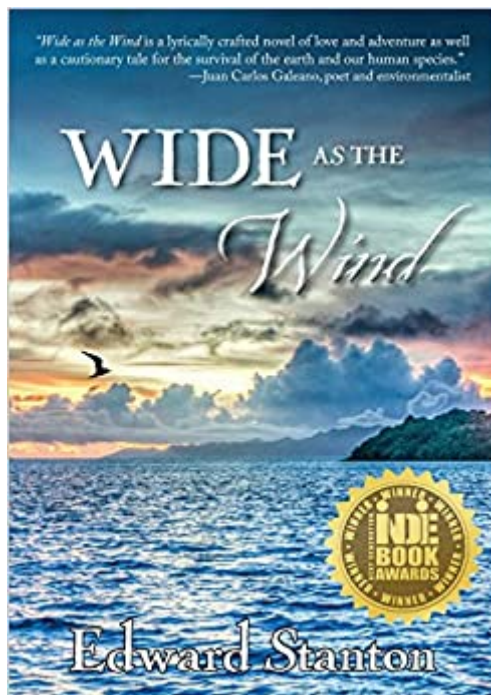


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Wide As The Wind



Synopsis

The lyrical tale of a boy, a girl, their island, and how they saved it. *Wide as the Wind* is the first novel to deal with the stunning, tragic history of Easter Island (VaitĩfĀa). It could be described as quest fiction for all ages in the line of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, but it is set in the real world, not Middle-earth. *Wide as the Wind* portrays Polynesian voyages across the Pacific Ocean in canoes with no metal parts or instruments: the greatest adventure in human prehistory, as bold as modern space voyages (National Geographic). When VaitĩfĀa is ravaged by war, hunger and destruction, it falls upon Miru, the fifteen-year-old son of a tribal warrior, to sail to a distant island to find the seeds and shoots of trees that could reforest their homeland. If he decides to undertake the voyage, he must leave behind KenetĩfĀa, a young woman from an enemy tribe with whom he has fallen deeply in love. And if Miru and his crew survive the storms, sharks and marauding ships that await them on a journey over uncharted ocean, an even greater mission would lie ahead. They must show their people that devotion to the earth and sea can be as strong as war and hatred. *Wide as the Wind* is both a stirring novel of adventure and a prophetic tale for our times.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up-This historical novel centers on a little-known chapter of Polynesian history. No island is specified, but the narrative conjures up Easter Island and others. Many of these islands were impoverished because of deforestation, so their best and brightest were sent on ocean voyages to obtain seed stock for trees in distant places. (In 1947, Norwegian Thor Heyerdahl tried to replicate such a journey with modern boat-building technologies and found building the boat

difficult. The voyage itself was harrowing.) Protagonist Miru is a valiant hero, sailing into the sunset and bringing back trees and plants that are essential to the viability of his close-knit community. Miru is well-developed, and he's featured in an engaging subplot of a chaste romance, sustained even through a long separation during his seafaring years. Miru's extended family is large, and many additional interactions between him and members of the community showcase his coming-of-age. For readers who appreciate intricately detailed storytelling, the payoff is a strong sense of Polynesian culture in a novel whose style is reminiscent of James Michener's. Stanton spent many years as an English literature professor, and his craftsmanship reflects this background. VERDICT Recommended for ambitious middle and high school readers who appreciate a depiction of a little-discussed but significant historical period and culture; for large historical fiction collections.-Amy Thurow, New Glarus School District, WI

***"Wide as the Wind" has won the 2017 Next Generation Indie Book Award for young adult fiction.**
Â Â This is the largest not-for-profit book awards program in North America. Reviews: "In the midst of a forbidden love, young Miru sails across dangerous Polynesian seas to find new seeds and trees for his island that has been ravaged by war. Wide as the Wind is a lyrically crafted novel of love and adventure as well as a cautionary tale for the survival of the earth and our human species. It now forms part of what has been called 'the environmental imagination.'" --Juan Carlos Galeano, poet and environmentalist "Wide as the Wind speaks to a fundamental truth: our need to protect the planet's environment." --John Flenley and Paul Bahn, authors of The Enigmas of Easter Island "Wide as the Wind transports us to an island world both outside time and urgently relevant to us in the 21st century. At the center of the story stands fifteen-year-old Miru, an extraordinary young man who is called upon to forsake passion, family, and security in a quest to restore his island so it might sustain his people again. This novel reminds us of what is important and what we might be called upon to set aside in order to make a world where we and our descendants can live and thrive." --Leatha Kendrick, author, Almanac of the Invisible

A TIMELY ADVENTURE STORY FILLED WITH EMOTION AND EXCITEMENT! THE ISLAND WAS SAVED. LET'S HOPE THE EARTH CAN BE SAVED AS WELL! ROBERT SWEEN

Years of tribal wars between the Tuus and the Raas have savaged the tiny Polynesian island of VaitÃ©a. Those tribespeople who survive the massacres are slowly starving to death. The high priestess Marama believes 15-year old Miru is the chosen one and tasks him with saving the island

and its people from total destruction. Though Miru is in love with Kenet, she is Raa and he is Tuu. So there is little hope for a future together while their fathers remain at war. Miru obeys Marama's command and becomes the captain of a seaworthy twin-hulled sailboat built by his grandfather's shipbuilders. His 10-year old sister Renga Roiti and Kenet's 10-year old brother Mohani make up his entire crew. The three kids set sail for the lush island of Ragi where they must harvest seeds and tree shoots to bring back to Vait, to restore what has been lost. During their long treacherous journey, Miru finds within himself not only strength and determination but the true answer to saving Vait -- peace. Miru understands that in order to save the environment he must first save his people from themselves. Though his quest challenges him to his very core he is drawn toward his destiny by his ancestors and the gods and goddesses who rule the land and sea. Stanton paints the ravages of Vait's war and the splendor of Ragi's paradise in vivid detail and poetic prose. Stanton has sculpted a modern parable that shows how mankind's hatred and violence sow the seeds of environmental devastation. Three pages of discussion questions at the end make this novel an excellent resource for a study in literature and/or climate change. "Wide as the Wind" is an inspiring adventure about the bravery and courage of three young earth warriors who save the future.

The precis offered for "Wide as the Wind" suggests that it could fit the category of "quest fiction for all ages." That description seems accurate, despite the fact that the principal protagonists are a boy in his mid-teens and his sister who hasn't even reached her teens. The two take on nothing short of the burden of saving their small, south Pacific island from its man-made destruction. (Could this be a concrete symbol for the ills of modern times? You be the judge.) I found this tale of the troubles this pair encountered and overcame to be most engaging--and I am old enough to be a grandparent of theirs! (I guess it's easier to think back in life--"I remember when . . ."--than forward.) Stanton's style, in descriptions of nature, in pursuing an inner train of thought, is often poetic, yet it is never affected or overbearing. It flows so naturally that it sneaks up on you, passing practically unnoticed until, perhaps with a shake of the head, you find yourself returning to the top of a passage and rereading it, the second time around to genuinely savor it. It appears that Stanton has done a good bit of research of a variety of sorts to be able to "think himself" successfully into a socio-temporal-geographical milieu so radically different from our own. But this too, like his poetic prose, is not flaunted in a manner that might make the book appear in any sense to be a "study." How much what we read adheres to known fact I can't say, but there is definitely enough of the

clearly factual in it to enable us to lend credence to the fanciful. Usually. But the intrusion of the incontestably fanciful does at times spring itself on us in the most charming of ways. The dwarf twins (Kuihi and Kuaha) who "simply appear" when they are needed and who vanish when their job is done (emerging from and reverting to, it seems, lizard form) quickly became favorites of mine. And there is a witch/sorceress/prophetess (Marama) who also elasticizes reality some, though ultimately not to excess, I must say, as part of her powers seem to depend on her mastery of the effects of certain drugs, and it turned out in the end that a number of her prophesies proved false. All in all, the interweaving of poetic elements with (sometimes gruesome) scenes of adventure and battle; the clear conflict felt by the main character (Muru) between his youthful romantic impulses and his sense of duty to his people and his island--these factors and more combine, in this imaginative journey the author takes us on, to make of "Wide as the Wind" a most enjoyable read.

Tribal conflict. Environmental desolation. Societal suffering. Based on ten years of Easter Island research, Edward Stanton's novel "Wide as the Wind" tells the coming of age tale of two Polynesian siblings who embark on a dangerous journey to restore natural and cultural life and prosperity to their diminishing home island. Opinion: This historical fiction novel provides a glimpse into a time of environmental distress due to war destruction and a loss of awareness towards the earth. "Wide as the Wind" takes place many years ago, yet it can speak to readers of all ages and backgrounds in a timeless way about the result of neglecting Earth's natural environment. This novel is a unique voyage adventure and has an anthropological viewpoint, however, the text meanders in places, so be prepared to muscle through some verbose sections. Stanton introduces readers to the lifestyle of a society and their culture in an accessible approach by incorporating fictional characters and writing in a decidedly fiction-esque style. Unfortunately, the second half of this book felt slow in comparison to the beginning. Despite moments of tedium, Stanton's "Wide as the Wind" is vividly tragic and dramatically rich. It's a historical tale without feeling historical. Featuring themes of adventure, war, and a comparable Romeo and Juliet type romance, this novel is perfect for readers weary of history and anthropology but zealous for adventure and drama. It gives a glimpse into an ancient society through an adolescent perspective, which can be interesting to fellow history and anthropology enthusiasts. Reviewed by a LitPick student book reviewer Age 18

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