

MODERN CLASSICS

Disney

MOANA

On the tropical island of Motunui, a silver haired woman named Gramma Tala stood in a thatched structure called a *fale* and told the story of her people.

'In the beginning, there was only ocean,' Gramma Tala said as village children listened. Gramma Tala used the *tapa* cloths that decorated the *fale* to illustrate her story. As Gramma Tala spoke, her words brought the images on the cloths to life.

One day, out of this endless ocean, an island emerged. The island was a beautiful goddess named Te Fiti. Te Fiti's heart had the power to create life. Te Fiti shared this power with the world.

Gramma Tala is one of the oldest people on Motunui. She is the most connected to the islander's past and their history of navigation. JIN KIM / DIGITAL



When developing Te Fiti, Andy Harkness, art director of environments, worked with clay to sculpt an outline that reflected the body of the goddess Te Fiti.
ANDY HARKNESS / CLAY SCULPT (TOP), ANDY HARKNESS / DIGITAL (BOTTOM)

As Te Fiti grew, the shape of her body formed verdant mountains and valleys. At the centre of this paradise, Te Fiti's heart shone, filling the world with life.

Gramma Tala said that time passed and some became jealous of Te Fiti's heart. These wicked creatures wanted to steal the heart and its life-giving power.

One day, the most daring of those wishing to take the heart sailed across the ocean and did just that. This trickster was Maui – a demigod with the power to transform himself with his magical fishhook.

Maui transformed into a hawk to fly to Te Fiti, where he became a lizard to crawl through her grass. Maui became a bug to squeeze through rocks. On the other side, Maui revealed himself as a powerful demigod with flowing black hair. Maui prised the heart from Te Fiti and smiled as he flipped it into the air, but when he caught it, the earth began to shake.

'Without her heart, the island of Te Fiti crumbled, giving birth to a terrible darkness,' Gramma Tala said.



The once green and beautiful island turned to dust. Maui ran, but his path was blocked by another who wanted the heart. This creature was Te Kā – a demon of earth and fire.



Gramma Tala is a natural storyteller. Her quirky character contrasts with that of her son, Chief Tui.
BILL SCHWAB / DIGITAL

Maui leapt to fight Te Kā but was blasted from the sky and never seen again. Also lost were Maui's fishhook and Te Fiti's heart, which sank deep beneath the ocean's waves.

Gramma Tala told the children that Te Kā was still out there. The darkness that began when Te Fiti's heart was stolen was getting closer, draining the life from everything until it consumed them all.

Terrified, the children stared at the old woman, except one little girl – Gramma Tala's granddaughter, Moana, clapped her hands and smiled for more.

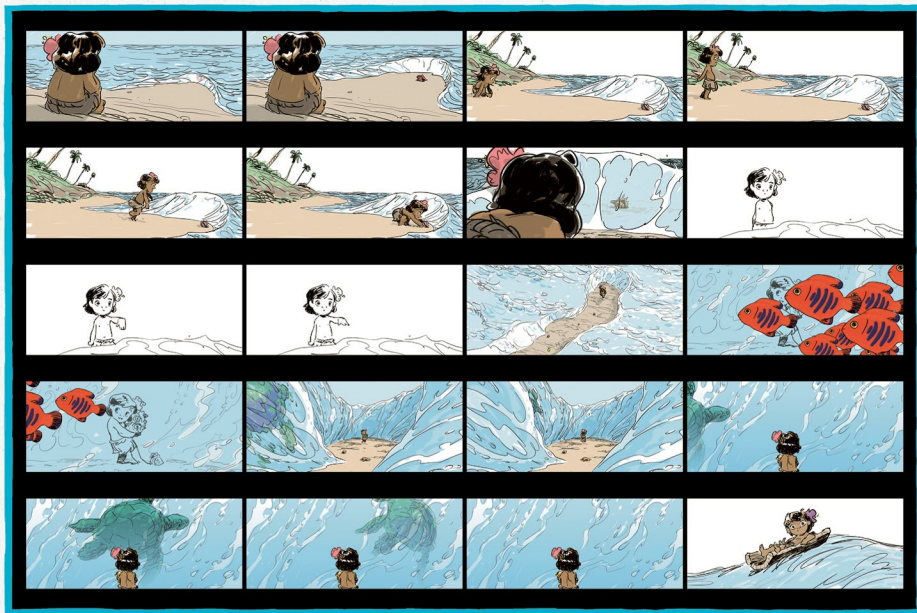
One day, Gramma Tala said, a person brave enough to sail beyond the reef surrounding their island would find Maui, restore the heart to Te Fiti and save them all.

Hearing this, Chief Tui strode into the fale and told his mother that they'd had enough stories. He assured the children that no one from Motunui ever sailed outside of the reef and said there were no monsters or darkness.

But as he said this, Chief Tui bumped into the side of the fale, causing the tapa cloths to unfurl and reveal pictures of terrifying creatures, plunging them all into darkness. The children screamed.

Chief Tui told the children that they were safe on the island. But Gramma Tala said that the legends were true. As Chief Tui and Gramma Tala argued, Moana crawled away to the beach.

Moana toddled towards the waves and saw a shell. Moana bent to collect it, but heard screeching behind her. Hungry birds were waiting for a baby turtle to emerge from the bushes. Moana wanted the shell, but the turtle needed help. Moana used a leaf to shield the turtle and guide it to safety.



This storyboard by co-director Chris Williams shows the first time a young Moana meets her best friend, the ocean. CHRIS WILLIAMS / DIGITAL

As the turtle swam away, the ocean rippled with magic and the waves parted to reveal the shell. Moana picked it up and spied another. As Moana walked towards it, the ocean opened itself to her. When her arms were full of shells, a wave rose up in front of her. Moana looked at it and the wave looked back.

Moana touched the wave and giggled as the water trickled on to her. The wave engulfed Moana's hair, topping it with a pink flower, but that wasn't all. The ocean had something else for Moana.

Moana looked into the ocean and saw a green jewel in the water. Moana reached out and took it – it was the heart of Te Fiti from Gramma Tala's story. At that moment, Moana heard her father.

The ocean floated Moana to shore. When Moana landed she stumbled, and dropped the heart. Moana reached for it, but before she could get it, her father scooped her up.

'You scared me,' her father said.

Moana wanted to go back, but her father said the ocean was dangerous.

As they walked to the village, Chief Tui told Moana that one day she would be chief. Moana's mother, Sina, told her she would do wonderful things as chief. But first, Moana needed to learn about the island.

Moana's father believed that there was no need to explore the ocean, because they had everything they needed right there. The people of Motunui were resourceful and worked together to make what they needed from what they could find on the island. Everything on the island had a use and nothing went to waste. Coconuts were used for food, their fibres were used to make nets, and their leaves were used to make fires.

As Moana grew up, Chief Tui taught her all about the island's many traditions. He hoped that when she became chief she would maintain them, just as he did.

Moana loved the island, but her heart always brought her back to the ocean.

Whenever Moana could escape from her duties, she ran to the shore to be with her Gramma Tala who liked to dance by the ocean. Many in the village thought this was strange, but Gramma Tala was doing what made her happy. Gramma Tala wanted the same for Moana. She told Moana to follow the voice inside her, no matter what. One day, Gramma Tala told Moana that this voice was who she really was and that Moana should follow it, even if it told her to travel across the ocean and disobey her father. Gramma Tala took Moana to the boats on the shore, but as Moana walked towards them, her father stopped her.

Chief Tui led Moana to a sacred place at the top of a mountain. There, Moana saw a mysterious tower of flat stones, placed on top of one another.



Motunui is a tropical island surrounded by a barrier reef. Moana's ancestors have called the island home for thousands of years. KEVIN NELSON / DIGITAL