

# Heart of a Samurai Study Guide

## Heart of a Samurai by Margi Preus

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## Plot Summary

"Heart of a Samurai" is a novel that is based on a true story by author Margi Preus. In this novel, Manjiro is a boy fisherman who gets lost at sea with the fellow fishermen from his village. When their boat washes up on a deserted island, Manjiro and the other fishermen do what they can to survive until one day they are rescued by an American-based whaling ship. Because it is the 19th century, Japan still has an isolationist attitude toward outsiders, so once the Japanese fishermen are rescued, they are not able to return to their country without the fear of facing imprisonment.

Manjiro and the other fishermen live on the American whaling boat for some time until they reach the Hawaiian island of Oahu. Here, the other fishermen find a home, while Manjiro decides to go on to live with the captain as his son in Massachusetts. When the captain and Manjiro reach Massachusetts, the captain remarries so that John Mung, Manjiro's American name, can have a normal boyhood.

Manjiro goes to school. Once he learns everything he can in elementary school, he enrolls in the local navigation academy. Manjiro continues to face adversity because of his race and origin, but he also has an opportunity to fulfill many of his hopes and dreams. In his late teens and early adulthood, Manjiro gets the opportunity to rescue his friends from Oahu and return to Japan, using money he earned when he finds some gold in the California gold rush. Upon their return, the fishermen are instantly imprisoned. When they are finally released, Manjiro returns to his village and family. He goes on to work with Japanese and American officials to foster a relationship between the west and Japan—finally fulfilling one of his long-term dreams.



# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 Summary

It is January of 1841. Off the shore of Japan, fishermen are in a boat. After three days of not catching any fish, they are so busy hauling in their catch that they don't notice a storm that is coming upon them. By the time they do notice, it is too late. The boat rudder and sail break and they lose the rowing oars.

Days pass as they drift at sea. The water sloshing into the boat has swept away almost all of the mackerel they had managed to catch. They all talk about the barbarians, which is anyone that is not from Japan. They also know that if and when they reach barbaric land that they will not be welcome back in Japan again.

By the eighth day of drifting out to sea, all of their food and water are gone. The fishermen begin to talk about what their dreams are. When it is Manjiro's turn, he says he wants to be a samurai. After he says it, he isn't even sure why he said it because that has not always been his dream.

One day, Manjiro wakes to a screeching a bird. He points it out to the other fishermen and says it's a sign that land is nearby. Eventually, they see an island looming in the distance and they wait to drift close enough to the island to land there. The fishermen notice the plethora of birds on the island so they think at least they will have food until they are rescued.

## Chapter 1 Analysis

Manjiro mentions that all there seems to be is earth, sky, wind and sea. These represent the four elements of the world. From each element, the fishermen can derive what they need to survive as they are stranded on the island. In spite of this, the fishermen seem to focus on one aspect for food, which is the birds from the sky, forgetting to use what they do have available to them on the island to fish from the sea, for example.

In this book, the Japanese paint outsiders as barbarians. They paint pictures of barbarians that make them sound like monsters rather than human beings that simply have different cultures. In the novel, the characters have ethnocentric views of the world. Therefore, they think the Japanese culture is the best and the only culture that should exist in the world. Anything that goes against this is wrong and barbaric.



## Chapter 2

### Chapter 2 Summary

By June, the fishermen have been stranded on the island for months. They use a cave for shelter, although it isn't very warm inside. They have plenty of birds to eat, but they are all sick of eating raw birds. They don't have any way to make a fire.

Manjiro thinks about the first day they arrived on the island. The boat hit the rocks, capsizing and splintering. After an earthquake, the opening of the cave they used as shelter was covered with rocks. Goemon, a boy the same age as Manjiro, talks with Manjiro about how Manjiro can never be a samurai now.

Goemon goes on to explain that samurais come from families of samurais, as fishermen come from families of fishermen. Since Manjiro comes from a family of fishermen that means he cannot be a samurai. They also discuss if they encounter barbarians that the barbarians are likely to poison them.

The discussion of becoming a samurai launches the boys into play sword fighting. Denzo, one of the other fishermen, scolds the boys for playing when they were sent to hunt for food and water. They make a meal of stone roasted bird.

Now, however, the birds are gone. One day, Denzo and Manjiro climb a big hill and spot a graveyard with tombstones. This indicates that other people inhabited the island at one time, but have since died. They tell the others what they saw when they return. The only one that doesn't comment is Toraemon because he is sick with a high fever.

When Toraemon does speak, he points out that there were two graves, therefore there has to be a third person. This gives them hope that this person was rescued. Months later, however, doubts of survival are creeping back into Manjiro's thoughts, and he can't get those graves out of his head.

Food and water starts to run out. The fishermen even try to drink their own urine. One day, Manjiro gets so dizzy that he starts to pass out. This causes him to miss the boats that are approaching the island. when Manjiro looks up, he is looking in to the blue eyes of his savior.

### Chapter 2 Analysis

The birds being gone from the island represent the circle of life and non-replenishment of resources. When the fishermen first arrived, birds were plentiful. After eating the birds for months, the birds were not able to reproduce as quickly as the fishermen were eating them. The few birds that were left managed to fly away.



Seeing and talking about the graveyard forces the fishermen to face their own mortality. Additionally, the fact that one of the fishermen is very ill with a high fever amplifies the fact that one, or all, of them can die. ironically, the very "barbarians" that Manjiro and the others are sacred of are the ones that save their lives.



## Chapter 3

### Chapter 3 Summary

When Manjiro wakes up again, he's staring at twelve pairs of shoes. He's onboard the John Howland, surrounded by blue eyed, gray eyed, and one eyed sailors. From the shore, the other fishermen are waving a flag to get the attention of the sailors, who end up rescuing the other fishermen as well.

The sailors feed the fishermen and give them new clothes to wear. The sailors teach the fishermen about eating with a fork, how to button their clothes, what shoes are, and what a pocket is in their pants. The fishermen are also taken aback by how nice the rooms in the ship are.

### Chapter 3 Analysis

The fishermen are dealing with culture shock. They are learning cultural differences between the Japanese and the sailors that have rescued them. The fishermen are being introduced to items and ways of life they have never encountered before. The fishermen also find it ironic that these so-called barbarians have such nice items. While the fishermen think the shoes they have to wear are barbaric compared to their comfortable sandals, the rooms and other items on the ship are so fancy and not what they expect from monsters.





# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

As Manjiro spends time onboard the ship, he starts to learn the language and the names for various items on the ship. Manjiro and Goemon keep pondering why a man stands up on the mast night and day, and what the sailors do with such huge pots on the decks of the ship. Goemon's theory is that they are looking for Japanese boys to cook in the pots.

When Captain Whitfield tells Manjiro he can ask all the questions he wants, Manjiro is so happy that he climbs into one of the smaller boats on the ship to celebrate in solitude. The man standing up on the mast spots something, however, and they lower the small boats into the water. When the sailors discover Manjiro is in the boat, the captain orders him to stay.

Manjiro quickly sees what the sailors have been looking for all this time—whales. The sailors use their spears to kill the whale. When the small boat starts taking on water, Manjiro starts bailing the water out—instinctively from the time he spent lost at sea with the fishermen. The captain deems Manjiro cut out for this type of work and they rename John Mung. Finally, Jolly, one of the sailors that has been harassing Manjiro is told to stop.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

Again, Manjiro runs into a situation of culture shock. In Japan, they believe it is wrong to kill—man or beast. On the occasions when a whale is killed by villagers, the villagers say a prayer over the whale. Manjiro is somewhat taken aback at the callousness of the sailors killing the whale. They don't say a prayer over it prior to or after killing it. The shock amplifies when the sailor makes a hole in the dead whale's head so they can tie a rope through it and haul it back to the main ship.

Additionally, Manjiro is experiencing the way of the "white man," with his name change. Because the sailors think his real name is not "proper" they rename him something they feel is fitting. In this case, they rename him John Mung.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

Manjiro watches as the sailors cut up the whale carcass. He finds out that they are pulling oil from the whale. Manjiro is exhausted but he is so anxious to learn that he doesn't want to miss anything. Denzo asks Manjiro if he participated with the sailors, and Manjiro says he did. Denzo says the sailors are wasting so much of the whale by just pulling out the oil and a waxy white substance from the whale's head.

Manjiro starts to ponder if he is losing himself in the ways of the barbarians, when Denzo points this out to him. When Manjiro returns to his room to think about, he pulls his small box of treasures out from underneath his bed. When he opens the box, it is empty.

## Chapter 5 Analysis

Denzo points out another cultural difference. This time it is that when the Japanese hunt a whale, they use every piece of the whale for some purpose. The sailors, on the other hand, are only keeping parts of the whale and throwing away the rest of it. Denzo and Goemon remind Manjiro where he is from and that he has to remain true to his heritage.



# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

When Manjiro looks up from the box, he sees Jolly standing there picking his teeth. Manjiro tells Jolly the food in the box was for his family. Jolly tells Manjiro he's never going to see his family again. The captain summons Manjiro to his chambers.

The captain tells Manjiro that he cannot return him and the others to Japan. He says stories of torture, imprisonment and execution for the Japanese that have left and returned prohibit the captain from taking them back to Japan. They tell each other about their families. Then, the captain plays music on his violin and reads poetry to Manjiro out of a book on the captain's desk.

## Chapter 6 Analysis

Manjiro indirectly accuses Jolly of stealing the food and other treasures he hid in his box. Manjiro is taken aback by how cultured the captain is. While he's always been taught that outsiders are barbaric monsters, the captain enjoys music and poetry. Additionally, the captain lost his wife before setting sail and Manjiro's father is dead, do in a way they feel as if they have some things in common—things that might even make them kindred spirits.



# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

Manjiro continues to learn while onboard the John Howland. He ponders at how the English words can have two meanings. Instead of identifying the sailors by hair and eye color, Manjiro has also learned their names. He's even become friends with most of the sailors, although, Jolly still isn't friendly with him.

One day while scrubbing, the sailors tell them that most of them are from America. They are surprised that Manjiro doesn't know what America is. They say that's where they are bringing all the whale oil—to light lamps in America. When the captain comes to talk to Manjiro, they talk about America being a land of opportunities. The captain asks Manjiro what his hopes and dreams are.

## Chapter 7 Analysis

Manjiro is starting to break down the cultural and ethnic barriers. He no longer sees the sailors as barbarians. He now sees them as people, which is why he learns their names and befriends the majority of them. The talk of the ship going to America foreshadows Manjiro starting a new life and taking advantage of all of the opportunities America offers him when he arrives there.



## Chapter 8

### Chapter 8 Summary

Manjiro and the others have been on the boat for six months. Denzo, the leader of the Japanese fishermen, comes to Manjiro. He tells Manjiro that the captain has found them a place to live. Denzo says they may be able to come back to Japan at some point. Denzo also tells Manjiro the captain asked for Manjiro to go to America to live with him as the captain's son. Denzo says the decision is for Manjiro to make.

Manjiro spends the next couple of days thinking about it. He tells Gaemon about a Longfellow poem the captain reads to him. He says he thinks the poem means that you can do anything and be anything you set your mind to be.

### Chapter 8 Analysis

Manjiro is having an inner struggle with who he is and who he wants to be. In his culture, you become what your family line is. In other words, everyone has their place and it is not right to move in and out of your position in society. In America, however, the opportunities are there for people to earn and to take. This means that Manjiro can break out of the mold and become whoever and whatever he wants to be. The plight he faces, however, is that he has to leave his family behind and everything he has ever known in order to make a new life for himself in America.



# Chapter 9

## Chapter 9 Summary

While in Honolulu, Manjiro and the others are invited to Dr. Gerrit Judd's house. He wants to see if they can identify some coins and a pipe he acquired from other shipwrecked fishermen. The Japanese verify that the items are from Japan.

Then, the captain takes out a map. The fishermen marvel at how small and insignificant Japan looks on the map. The captain points out the city in Massachusetts, where he is from. After looking at the map, Manjiro decides that he's going to America.

## Chapter 9 Analysis

The Japanese fishermen do not believe that their country is as small and insignificant as it appears on the map the captain shows them. The captain and Manjiro both believe that the Japanese cannot truly evaluate the size or shape of Japan because they do not allow the Japanese to come and go from the country. The other fishermen believe that because Japan is so important to them that their country must be larger and more significant than the map portrays. This is an illustration of their ethnocentricity.



# Chapter 10

## Chapter 10 Summary

The fishermen are given new clothes and money to start their new lives. Because the captain doesn't know of Manjiro's decision yet, Manjiro sees sadness in the captain's eyes. Manjiro asks Goemon to go to the beach with him. Manjiro wants to tell Goemon he's going to America, but Goemon degrades the way of the Americans. As they are leaving the beach, they hear footsteps following

## Chapter 10 Analysis

It's ironic how the two boys that are the same age, Manjiro and Goemon, see things so differently. Up until now, the boys' lives have been very similar. They both come from fishing families, are from the same village and are the same age. While Goemon sees everything the barbarians do as wrong, Manjiro embraces the new experiences and simply sees it as their way of life.

Manjiro represents hope and change. Goemon represents tradition and resistance to change.



# Chapter 11

## Chapter 11 Summary

Manjiro can smell that the men are whaling men. Manjiro also realizes that Goeman didn't get away, but that they men have him hostage, too. Jolly steps out of the shadows. He says he's going to plant the captain's pocket watch on Manjiro to accuse of him of stealing it from the captain. The whalers with Jolly try to steal the coins from the boys' pockets, but Manjiro somehow conceals him from the men.

In the struggle to try to find Manjiro's coins, Jolly's arm catches on fire from the bonfire. As Jolly runs screaming back to the ship, Manjiro retrieves the silver disc, which is the captain's pocket watch, from the sand.

Goemon thanks Manjiro for saving his life, but Manjiro denies the men were going to kill them. Manjiro gives Goemon his silver coins, saying he won't need the money while working on the ship. Goemon says he'll regret going with the barbarians but Manjiro says he'll never forget any of them and that they'll see each other again someday.

## Chapter 11 Analysis

When Manjiro tries to return the pocket watch to the captain, the captain might think he stole it. The captain might believe this because Jolly says he told the captain Manjiro had the item before trying to plant it on Manjiro. When Goemon finds out that Manjiro plans to stay on the ship, he warns Manjiro about men like Jolly. Manjiro, realistically, replies that there are men like Jolly all over the world. He adds that at least he knows what he's dealing with when it comes to Jolly, while if he chooses to face other evil men in the world, he is dealing with the unknown.





# Chapter 12

## Chapter 12 Summary

As the ship sets sail, Manjiro watches as Goemon and the others become smaller and smaller on land. The first mate starts yelling at Manjiro to go up to the platform. As he climbs higher, he thinks about how to give the captain his watch back without looking like the thief.

After not seeing Jolly for days, Manjiro starts to relax a bit. Then, he overhears some of the other sailors talking about what happened to Jolly. While Manjiro doesn't understand what they are saying, he knows that something bad happened to him and Manjiro blames himself for it.

Manjiro decides the next morning to return to the watch to the captain. He can't though because he is sent directly from his bed to masthead. While he's looking at the watch, the boat lurches and the watch flies out of Manjiro's hands and into the ocean, where it sinks.

## Chapter 12 Analysis

As Manjiro watches his friends onshore get smaller and smaller, he likens himself to a kite he once saw a child flying in Japan. He thought of what the kite would be able to see if it had eyes. Manjiro is thinking of all of the things and places his eyes will be able to see while on his journey to his new life with the captain.

Manjiro feels guilt and remorse for Jolly being gone. This shows what a good person Manjiro is. While he and Jolly never got along, Manjiro also never wished for any harm to come to Jolly.



# Chapter 13

## Chapter 13 Summary

Manjiro is still thinking about how to tell captain about the pocket watch. Mr. Davis, one of the sailors, tells Manjiro that since he came aboard they have been finding a lot of whales, so Manjiro must be their lucky charm. They row the small boats to a dead whale, and they take the oil from it. The white stuff they take from the whale, Manjiro finds out, is used to make perfume oil. Then, one of the sailors pulls the captain's watch out from inside of the whale.

## Chapter 13 Analysis

The longer Manjiro waits to tell the captain about his watch, the guiltier it makes Manjiro look. When the sailor finds the captain's watch, it means that an explanation is in order as to how it got there.



# Chapter 14

## Chapter 14 Summary

Manjiro admits to the captain how his watch got inside of the whale. The captain finds out the watch got caught on the lines of one of the boats and that is how the sailor made it look as if the whale had swallowed the pocket watch. The captain tells Manjiro to only look for whales when he's up the masthead from now on. The captain also tells Manjiro that the purpose of the watch is to tell time. Manjiro says in Japan that they don't have watches, but tell time by the bells chiming in the temple.

## Chapter 14 Analysis

When the captain and Manjiro compare how they tell time in America and Japan, they find out that there are similarities. For example, Manjiro says this time of day is the time of the dog. The captain says that's interesting because they call the watch during this period the dogwatch. When they compare the names of some of the stars in the sky, however, the similarities end.

# Chapter 15

## Chapter 15 Summary

After three years at sea, with Manjiro away from Japan for two years, the John Howland arrives back in its home port in Massachusetts. Manjiro is enthralled with the new and exotic world that he knows as America. While he and the captain are walking through town, some boys make fun of him by slanting their eyes. A gentleman comes along and shoos the boys away so that they'll leave Manjiro alone.

When the captain returns with his purchases, he and Manjiro head to the captain's house. When they arrive, they find the house in ruins. The captain says that Itchy, one of the sailors, and his parents, the Akens, live next door. They stay with them. Manjiro overhears a conversation between the Akens and the captain about him setting up a farm and finding a wife and mother. the captain tells them he's very fond of someone and he leaves for New York. Manjiro stays behind with the Akens.

## Chapter 15 Analysis

The boys in port are making fun of Manjiro because they have never seen anyone of Asian descent before. Manjiro has to get used to the ways of the new world in which he is now living. Additionally, the captain feels compelled to set up a real home and family to raise Manjiro. This is what compels the captain to go off to New York to get a wife.



# Chapter 16

## Chapter 16 Summary

When the captain returns from New York, he has his new wife, Albertina with him. Manjiro likes her instantly. He buys a farm, they build a new house and Manjiro gets a horse, which he names Plum Duff. Manjiro falls off Plum Duff a lot. One day when he falls off in a field, he meets a boy his age, Terry.

Manjiro teaches Terry how to swordfight, filet a fish and games Manjiro knows from Japan. Terry tries to teach Manjiro how to ride Plum Duff, which they now call Duffy. Terry teaches Manjiro everything he knows about being an American boy.

## Chapter 16 Analysis

Manjiro befriendng Terry provides each of them with the opportunity to learn about different cultures from one of their peers. Both boys are sixteen, so Terry can share the ways of America with Manjiro and vice versa.



# Chapter 17

## Chapter 17 Summary

Because Manjiro cannot write, he records all of the differences between America and Japan in his mind. At two different churches, two different Sunday mornings, Manjiro notices the way the church elders and deacons look at him funny. When Manjiro asks the captain what it is, the captain angrily tells Manjiro that the deacons think Manjiro should sit in the seats reserved for negroes.

## Chapter 17 Analysis

Manjiro is experiencing racism for the first time. Manjiro also learns that he can be the change in the world or he can sit back and watch as everything happens. It also appears as if Mrs. Whitfield is ahead of her time. She's talking about a world where slavery and segregation is abolished, and where women have the same rights as men.



# Chapters 18 and 19

## Chapters 18 and 19 Summary

Manjiro starts school. He has to attend school with the small children, even though he is sixteen, because he's never been to school before. Once he learns everything he can at that school, the captain says he can transfer to the navigation school Manjiro dreams of. The captain says there are conditions though. Manjiro can only continue to attend that school if he keeps up with the other students.

The first day Manjiro arrives at the Barlett School, he sees a coin on the ground. Each time he tries to pick it up, the coin moves. Manjiro realizes two boys are playing a trick on him. He recognizes one of the boys, Tom, as one of the boys who made fun of him when he first arrived in America. Tom starts being mean to Manjiro and calling him names. Instead of fighting with Tom, Manjiro performs a coin trick of his own.

As Manjiro starts the trick, he notices a pretty girl standing in the crowd. Manjiro makes the coin disappear and then reappear from behind the girl's ear. Mr. Bartlett, the schoolmaster, is standing in his doorway watching and then summons everyone into the classroom. From this point on, Job, the other boy involved in the coin trick, becomes friends with Manjiro and Terry. Tom and his friends, however, continue to try to make it hard for Manjiro to fit in.

## Chapters 18 and 19 Analysis

Manjiro is trying to win the students over with kindness. While most of them will accept him, students like Tom are racist and will continue to give him a hard time. There is some foreshadowing that the girl Manjiro spots in the crowd will become his first girlfriend. Tom and his friends will bring the situation with Manjiro to a boiling point. The problem is that if Manjiro starts any trouble, or is involved in any trouble, Mr. Bartlett will kick Manjiro out of school.



# Chapters 20 and 21

## Chapters 20 and 21 Summary

Through the winter season, the students are very busy, so Tom and his friends don't have much time to pick on Manjiro. By spring, the taunting picks up once again. Terry, Job and Manjiro discuss what Manjiro can do about Tom and his friends. Mrs. Whitfield overhears the boys talking about sword fighting. She says if he's being bullied that he should talk to Mr. Whitfield.

Manjiro feels the only one he can talk to in Japanese is Duffy. He asks her what he should do. Then, he announces to his friends that he has challenged Tom to a horse race. Terry says Tom has been riding longer than him and that they have to practice for the next two weeks before the race. Terry and Job get flustered when Manjiro keeps falling off the horse.

## Chapters 20 and 21 Analysis

Manjiro is adjusting to life in America. He still has problems with Tom and Tom's group of friends. Manjiro and his friends make a plan to try to stop Tom from picking on Manjiro. Manjiro has faith that the horse race will work. Manjiro's friends, however, can see that Manjiro is out of his league when it comes to racing against Tom in a horse race.





# Chapter 22

## Chapter 22 Summary

The day of the race arrives. Manjiro is very nervous. The captain says he knows something has been bothering Manjiro. The captain also tells Manjiro that he's set up an apprenticeship for Manjiro to start next spring, that the captain is going back out to sea and that Manjiro will have someone to keep him company very soon.

Tom and Manjiro race. While racing, Manjiro thinks about all of the independence and freedom he's had since coming to America. When Manjiro crosses the finish line, Tom is already there, dismounted from his horse. Tom's father shows up and strikes Tom across the face. This is when the crowd realizes the marks they always see on Tom that they thought was from him being tough and fighting is from his father's beatings

Tom's father hauls Tom and the horse away. Later, when Manjiro comes across Tom sitting in a ditch, Tom claims to have fallen.

## Chapter 22 Analysis

Manjiro thinks the captain knows he's caused trouble at school, but the captain doesn't. The captain thinks that what's bothering Manjiro is that he heard the captain is returning to sea. The captain saying Manjiro will have someone to keep him company soon is an implication that Mrs. Whitfield is pregnant.

# Chapters 23 and 24

## Chapters 23 and 24 Summary

The captain goes back to sea. At first, Manjiro misses their nightly talks on the porch terribly. Then, Manjiro discovers a book about everything he needs to know to navigate at sea. He's so busy working odd jobs to make enough money to buy his own copy of the book, that he doesn't have time to be lonely. Mrs. Whitfield gives birth to William Henry.

Manjiro loves the baby instantly. It also causes Manjiro to recall when his sisters were born back in Japan. Manjiro is smitten with the baby but he's also smitten with a girl. On May Day, Manjiro leaves a basket of flowers and a poem at Catherine's door. He's supposed to knock, so she can catch him and kiss him. When Manjiro hears voices inside of Catherine's house, though, he gets scared and runs away without knocking.

Later, in the woods, Manjiro overhears Catherine talking to her friends. She says she got a basket from John. When her friends talk to her about marrying John, they say she never really can because of what Catherine's parents would say and what everyone would think. Catherine insists that John is smart and nice.

## Chapters 23 and 24 Analysis

It foreshadows that Manjiro and Catherine, the girl from the first day of school, are going to start a relationship. Manjiro realizes that even though he has done everything to assimilate into the American culture that he will never truly fit in—never be fully accepted.



# Chapters 25 and 26

## Chapters 25 and 26 Summary

Manjiro moves to Mr. Hussey's shop for his apprenticeship. He goes to school during the day and works in the afternoons. Manjiro is homesick for the Whitfields, but he's also homesick for Japan. He and the other apprentice are always sick, so when he wakes up this time, he finds Mrs. Whitfield standing over him saying they've brought him home.

In the summer of 1846, Mr. Davis from the John Howland comes to the farm. He wants Manjiro to come work for him on a new boat that he's now the captain. Manjiro starts to decline until Mr. Davis tells him they'll be sailing in Japanese waters and Manjiro might have the chance to return home. Manjiro says he'll think about it and talk to Mrs. Whitfield.

Mrs. Whitfield agrees to let him go. Manjiro says goodbye to everyone. Five years after leaving Japan, Manjiro is now returning home. When Manjiro arrives at the ship, the Franklin, he finds Jolly aboard. Jolly doesn't recognize Manjiro until the captain shouts the name Mung. Then, Jolly tells Manjiro it's not too late for him to get off the ship. Manjiro feels as if Jolly is warning him of something or someone.

## Chapters 25 and 26 Analysis

Manjiro is struggling with where he truly belongs. He loves many things about his life in America. At the same time, however, he loves many things about his life in Japan too. It appears as if Manjiro is now coming full circle in his life. He left Japan when he was fourteen. He spent the next five years finding adventure on the John Howland and then in America. Now, at the age of nineteen, Manjiro has a chance to return home.

Manjiro takes Jolly's statement as a warning that something bad is about to happen. This may cause Manjiro to give up his chance to return to Japan and to stay in America instead.



# Chapter 27

## Chapter 27 Summary

Manjiro endures a rough voyage at sea until they finally come across a row of Japanese fishing boats. Itchy, who is also on board the ship, rows Manjiro over to them. Manjiro changed into his traditional Japanese clothing before going. When Manjiro tries to talk to the fishermen, he realizes they speak in a different dialect. He asks they take a letter to his mother. when Manjiro pulls the envelope from his pocket, they stare at him in astonishment and make haste in getting away.

## Chapter 27 Analysis

Manjiro's hopes and dreams of returning to Japan are dashed.



# Chapters 28 and 29

## Chapters 28 and 29 Summary

When he returns to the ship, Mr. Davis accuses Manjiro of trying to desert the ship. Manjiro tries to get the captain to loan him a whaleboat to go after the men, but the captain emphatically denies the request.

By February of 1848, the whaling is not going well for the Franklin crew. Manjiro pushes on but it's difficult. Especially since the Japanese fishermen rowed away from him, Manjiro realizes that his motivation before was going home. Now his motivation is gone. Right before the captain attacks who he believes is the Jonah, a giant turtle is spotted in the water.

Someone throws a knife at the turtle's head and blood spills out. Manjiro jumps in the water and the turtle takes Manjiro under. Manjiro eventually pulls his knife, slits the turtle's throat and drags the carcass back to the ship. Everyone is cheering except the captain, who scowls at Manjiro and walks away.

## Chapters 28 and 29 Analysis

The crew keeps speaking of having a Jonah aboard ship. A Jonah is bad luck. Manjiro starts to think the Jonah might be Manjiro. The giant sea turtle saves Manjiro. When Manjiro catches the sea turtle, it angers the captain, however, because the captain was about to dispose of the Jonah. Now that Manjiro has killed the sea turtle for the ship, the captain can no longer get rid of his Jonah.



# Chapters 30 and 31

## Chapters 30 and 31 Summary

In the middle of the night, Manjiro wakes up and realizes the boat is moving. When he goes up on deck, all of the sailors are nice to him now because of what he did with the sea turtle. Jolly tells them all that he has a plan for them to take over the ship from the captain, which Manjiro points out is mutiny. Jolly says he tried to warn Manjiro that first day aboard about how crazy Davis is. This is when Davis comes on deck in his nightshirt and starts firing a musket.

Manjiro realizes that Davis never intended to allow him to return to Japan. Davis just used it as a ruse to get Manjiro to work for him. Manjiro starts to stand up to Davis when a whale is spotted. Itchy says Davis has lost his mind, and they should elect new officers so they can start whale hunting.

They imprison the captain below deck and vote Itchy the new captain. They elect Mung as harpooner.

## Chapters 30 and 31 Analysis

This is Manjiro's loss of innocence. He now realizes that Davis, who he considered to be a friend, used Manjiro for Davis's own gain. Manjiro is quickly moving up the ranks on the ship. Now, he knows that his fellow shipmates have more respect for him.



# Chapters 32 and 33

## Chapters 32 and 33 Summary

Before Manjiro knows it, he is standing in the whaleboat and they are rowing closer to the whale. Upon command, Manjiro spears the whale. After this experience, Manjiro just wants to make enough money to retrieve his fishermen friend from the Hawaiian island and go home to Japan, where he plans to change their outlook on outsiders one person at a time.

Manjiro is on an island where the Franklin is anchored. Mr. Davis was handed over to the whaling office and is presumably on his way home to Massachusetts. Manjiro encounters a parrot on the island that says hello in Japanese. By this time, Manjiro is twenty-two and William Henry is five. Manjiro buys the parrot as a gift for William Henry. On the voyage home, Manjiro teaches the parrot more words in Japanese so when William Henry visits him in Japan, William Henry will know a few words of Japanese.

Captain and Mrs. Whitfield meet Manjiro when the ship docks. The captain says he's proud of Manjiro and asks about the bird. When Manjiro says it's a present for William Henry, the captain tells Manjiro William Henry died of fever. At home, Manjiro watches the parrot fly around the parlor. It's lost weight and feathers.

## Chapters 32 and 33 Analysis

While Manjiro is killing the whale, he keeps thinking about how wrong his actions are. He is struggling again with his identity. He's not sure if he should be acting as a Japanese or an American person.

Manjiro relates to the parrot. Both Manjiro and the parrot have been taken from their native homes and transplanted into new homes. Both have suffered the consequences of these actions because both were taken from their home against their will.



# Chapters 34 and 35

## Chapters 34 and 35 Summary

By October of 1849, John Mung is still in Fairhaven, Massachusetts. He runs into Terry, who drags him to have his portrait taken with a new invention, photography. On their walk to the studio, Terry tries to convince Manjiro to go to California with him to look for gold. Terry's photo turns out with a blur, making Manjiro feel as if Terry is already gone.

In the late spring or early summer of 1850, Terry and Manjiro are on a steamboat from San Francisco to Sacramento. The entire ride, Terry is reading about panning for gold and sharing the information with Manjiro. Manjiro is obsessed with the fact that the boat is being propelled by the steam and wheel instead of the wind.

When they arrive at the riverbed, they find numerous other men there searching for gold. In Manjiro's first scoop of dirt, he finds something glittering and thinks it's gold. The other men call him a fool and Terry explains that gold sinks and that it's dull, not shiny. They continue the hard work and Manjiro finds a dull lump of gold.

## Chapters 34 and 35 Analysis

Terry trying to convince Manjiro to go panning for gold in California and Terry's blurry photograph is foreshadowing that the two friends will have a new adventure. Additionally, if and when Manjiro finds gold, it provides him with the source of money he needs to rescue his friends from the Hawaiian island of, Oahu, and return to Japan. Manjiro finding gold means that he is now able to rescue his friends and return home to their native land of Japan.





# Chapters 36 and 37

## Chapters 36 and 37 Summary

In January of 1851, Manjiro has hired a boat captain on the Sarah Boyd to take him and his friends to the waters near Japan. He also bought a whaling boat, the Adventurer, to row them in the rest of the way. It is Manjiro, Denzo and Goemon. Toraemon refused to come and Jusuke died. When they reach the land of Japan, they see men coming to arrest them.

Then, they realize that it is not men to arrest them but villagers offering them food and water. As the crowd parts, however, there are officials there to arrest them. The officials think Manjiro and his friends are spies. After marching them away from the village, they eventually stop to cook a meal and rest. Manjiro and his friends talk about what might happen to them.

## Chapters 36 and 37 Analysis

Manjiro and the others have finally come full circle in their lives. Ten years ago they were lost at sea from a storm. Ten years later they return to their homeland. Ironically, their native people do not welcome them with open arms upon their return. Instead, they imprison them as suspected spies.



# Chapters 38 and 39

## Chapters 38 and 39 Summary

By the fall of 1851, Manjiro and the others have been in prison for a few seasons. Manjiro uses the time to learn how to read and write in Japanese. They have all gone through intense interrogations about America. One day, the daimyo, one of the most powerful men in the country, summons Manjiro.

Lord Nariakira asks Manjiro numerous questions. He wants to know about the American inventions. Nariakira also wants a lot of information on America's guns, weapons and plans for war. While Manjiro supplies Nariakira with all of this information, he also assures Nariakira that America doesn't want to attack Japan. They simply want a port where their ships can resupply. From this prison, Manjiro and the others are moved to another prison in Nagasaki.

The prisoners there say it is usually a formality prior to release. This prison is worse than the one they were in before. They undergo intense interrogations. The other prisoners are whispering about a civil war breaking out in Japan.

## Chapters 38 and 39 Analysis

Manjiro returned to Japan to try to help it change. He's beginning to understand how hard a feat this can be since the country hasn't changed much at all since he left. After almost twelve years, Japan is just as isolated from the rest of the world as it has always been. Additionally, its fear of the unknown is what perpetuates the isolationism.



# Chapters 40 and 41

## Chapters 40 and 41 Summary

By June of 1852, Manjiro is out of prison. He is walking on his long journey back to his village. He's dropped his friends off in their villages and is now alone. After days of walking, he arrives in his village to find that nothing has changed. He's worried about what he'll find in his family's hut. When he says hello as he enters, a bunch of strange faces stare back at him. Then, his mother appears.

The village brings food and drink to the hut to celebrate Manjiro's return. Manjiro passes out all the gifts he was allowed to keep for his family. The next morning, a messenger comes for Manjiro. The great lord of Tosa is demanding Manjiro's presence in Kochi. The messenger says some people think Manjiro is a spy, while others believe the lord will turn Manjiro into a samurai.

## Chapters 40 and 41 Analysis

It seems as if Manjiro's dream of becoming a samurai has the possibility of coming true. Ironically, Manjiro has already served two years in prison and after being back in his village for only one day, he faces the possibility of further imprisonment.

# Epilogue

## Epilogue Summary

By July of 1853, Manjiro is teaching in Japan. This is the same time when the first American ships are allowed to come into the ports of Japan. The shogun in Edo appoints Manjiro a samurai and helps foster the relations between the Americans and the Japanese. By 1854, a peace agreement is in place between America and Japan.

Many Japanese continue to be suspicious of Manjiro throughout the rest of his life. He even hired a body guard for protection against assassins. Manjiro had many accomplishments including designing ocean vessels, writing the first English book in Japan and translating "The New American Practical Navigator" into Japanese.

He joined the Japanese embassy to the U.S. as an interpreter, married three times and had three children. He visited with Captain and Mrs. Whitfield when he could and their families still visit each other today.

## Epilogue Analysis

Manjiro was able to accomplish the majority of his hopes, dreams and goals. Even the ones he thought unattainable, such as becoming a samurai. His influence helped pave the change in the relationship between Japan and the outside world, specifically America. His goal in returning to Japan was to create this change, and he was ultimately able to help make this dream a reality.



# Characters

## Manjiro

Manjiro is a fourteen-year-old Japanese boy when the novel opens. He is the sole provider for his family because his father is dead. He is in a boat fishing off the Japanese shore when a storm blows in, which gets the boat and the fishermen lost at sea.

While lost at sea, each fisherman is telling of his hopes and dreams. Manjiro blurts out that his dream is to become a samurai. They all know this cannot happen because samurais come from samurai families, and Manjiro comes from a fishermen family.

Manjiro is always eager to learn. He excels at learning while onboard the American whaling ship. He becomes endeared to the captain, so Manjiro decides to go to America to live with the captain as his son. Manjiro faces prejudice and ridicule while he lives in America but he always perseveres.

As a man, Manjiro returns to Japan. He learns how to read and write in Japanese during his imprisonment upon his return. He goes to fulfill his dream of becoming a samurai. He also works with diplomats and officials of both countries to form a peace agreement between America and Japan.

## Captain Whitfield

Captain Whitfield is the captain of the John Howland, which is the ship that rescues Manjiro and the other fishermen. While the captain has to be stern as the leader of the ship, he is also a kind man. He encourages Manjiro to ask a lot of questions and always try to help Manjiro to learn whatever it is he wants to learn.

The captain extends the offer to Manjiro for him to go to live with the captain in Massachusetts. The captain also gives up his life as a ship captain to buy a farm and remarry so that Manjiro can live a normal life.

The captain is a selfless man that is always looking out for Manjiro. Eventually, the captain goes back to sea to make more money to help support his family. The captain is a very loving man that treats Manjiro as if he is his natural born son.

## Goemon

Goemon is a boy that is the same age as Manjiro. He is also one of the fishermen on the boat that gets lost at sea. While Manjiro is always eager to learn English and things on the boat, Goemon is very resistant to learning anything. Goemon chooses to live on



Oahu with the other fishermen, but does return to Japan with Manjiro when they are adults.

## Toraemon

Toraemon is another one of the fishermen on the boat when it gets lost at sea. He too lives on Oahu. Toraemon chooses to remain living on the island of Oahu when the others return to Japan.

## Denzo

Denzo is the oldest and the one in charge of the fishermen. He is the leader and decision maker throughout the novel when it comes to the Japanese fishermen. Denzo presents the offer to Manjiro about living with the captain. Denzo even allows Manjiro to make his own decision about it. Denzo returns to Japan with Manjiro and Goemon.

## Jusuke

Jusuke is another one of the fishermen that gets lost at sea. He lives on Oahu with the other Japanese fishermen. He dies prior to Manjiro returning to Oahu to rescue the men and return with them to Japan.

## Jolly

Jolly is one of the American sailors on the John Howland. He is always very mean to Manjiro and the others. He is prejudiced and says racist things to them and tries to make life for them difficult. When the captain fires Jolly, Jolly is the one that steals the captain's pocket watch and tries to frame Manjiro for the theft.

When Jolly and Manjiro serve on another ship together later, though, Jolly's opinion and treatment of Manjiro changes. At this time, Jolly tries to protect Manjiro against the wrath of the captain.

## Itchy

Itchy is one of the sailors on the John Howland. He also turns out to be Captain Whitfield's neighbor in Massachusetts. Itchy lives in the home with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Aken. Itchy also sails again with Manjiro on the other ship, where a mutiny takes place, and Itchy appoints Manjiro as the harpoonist for the whaling mission.



## **Albertina Whitfield**

Albertina Whitfield is Captain Whitfield's second wife. He goes to marry Albertina in New York and then returns with her to the farm to help him raise Manjiro. Mrs. Whitfield ends up giving birth to William Henry. She is always very supportive and loving toward Manjiro, treating him as she would her own child.

## **Terry**

Terry is a boy that is Manjiro's age, when Manjiro starts living in Massachusetts. Terry is fishing when he sees Manjiro fall off his horse. The two boys become fast friends. Terry teaches Manjiro American things and Manjiro teaches Terry Japanese things.

## **Tom**

Tom is also a boy that is Manjiro's age. Tom is constantly tormenting and taunting Manjiro. Tom has a reputation for being tough. It turns out that Tom's bruises, scratches and injuries are from his father beating Tom.

## **Job**

Job is one of Tom's friends. Job tries to defend Manjiro against Tom's torment. Job ends up becoming friends with Manjiro and Terry.



# Objects/Places

## Bird Island

Bird Island is the deserted island where the Japanese fishermen live when they are shipwrecked. The fishermen call it Bird Island because when they first arrive there, there are hundreds of birds living on the island. This is also the island where the American sailors rescue the Japanese fishermen.

## Graveyard

While on Bird Island, Manjiro comes across a graveyard. He sees two tombstones there and assumes the people shipwrecked here before died. Manjiro's hope is renewed when one of the other fishermen suggests that if there are two graves that someone else had to have been on the island at one time to bury the dead.

## Cave

When the fishermen first arrive on Bird Island, they use the cave as their shelter. The cave is very cold, but it does protect the fishermen from the rain and wind. The opening of the cave ends up getting covered by falling boulders.

## John Howland

The John Howland is the name of the ship that rescues the Japanese fishermen. Captain Whitfield is in charge of the John Howland. The rooms on the John Howland are some of the most ornate rooms Manjiro and the others have ever seen.

## Treasure Box

One of the fishermen gives Manjiro a small treasure box while he's on the John Howland. Manjiro hides small trinkets and pieces of food in the trinket box so he can give it to his family when he returns to Japan. One day, Manjiro retrieves the treasure box and finds that it is empty.

## Oahu

Oahu is one of the Hawaiian islands. Oahu is the island where the Japanese fishermen live until Manjiro returns to take them back to Japan. It is while on Oahu that Jolly tries to frame Manjiro for stealing the captain's pocket watch, but Manjiro and Goemon are able to escape from Jolly when Jolly's arm catches on fire.





## Terry's Photograph

Terry has a photograph taken prior to leaving for California. Terry's photograph turns out blurry because Terry won't stop talking and moving while the photographing is shooting the photo. Terry plans to give the photograph to his parents so they'll have it when he's away in California.

## Gold

Terry and Manjiro go to California to search for gold. Manjiro end up finding some gold. He sells the gold he finds for the money he needs to return to Japan with the other fishermen.

## Parrot

While visiting an island, Manjiro comes across a parrot that speaks Japanese. Manjiro buys the parrot as a gift for William Henry. The parrot start to lose its feather and look malnourished when living in the Whitfield's parlor instead of the tropical island where Manjiro bought the bird.

## Shells

Manjiro collects shells from all the places he visits. He puts them in a box. He gives his mother the shells when he returns to his village in Japan. She says the shells are like the people in the world because they came in all shapes, sizes and colors.



# Themes

## Relationships

One of the primary themes running through the novel is relationships. In this particular novel, the relationships include friendships and family relationships. Friendship is one type of relationship the novel tackles. Manjiro is friends with the Japanese fishermen because they have a common goal of finding fish to feed their families back in their respective villages. When the fishermen end up shipwrecked together, their bond strengthens because they have to depend on one another to live.

When the fishermen board the John Howland, Manjiro extends his friendship to the sailors aboard the ship. At this point, Manjiro starts to struggle with his allegiance to his Japanese friends and his forming friendships with his friends from the west. Additionally, the captain and Manjiro become very good friends. Their commitment to one another and their friendship is represented throughout the novel. The bond the two share morphs into a father-son relationship.

Family relationships are the other type of relationships covered in the novel. When Manjiro's father dies, Manjiro becomes the head of his household. This requires him to find food and take care of his mother and his siblings. When Manjiro winds up shipwrecked, the fishermen become his family. Finally, Manjiro knows what it is like to have a true family when he starts living with Captain Whitfield and Mrs. Whitfield. Additionally, Manjiro feels the family bond strengthen when William Henry is born.

## Coming of Age

One of the primary themes that run throughout the novel is growing up and coming of age, even against adversity, such as having to move to a different country. Manjiro struggles with the fact that his coming of age includes having to learn how to live as an American, which causes him to have to turn his back on many of his Japanese beliefs. Manjiro also has to deal with prejudice and racism because he is the only Japanese person in the area of Massachusetts where he lives.

Manjiro takes on adult responsibilities when his father dies and he is left to care for his family in Japan. When he becomes Captain Whitfield's son, Manjiro has the opportunity to live the life of a boy and is able to relinquish some of the adult responsibilities he had in Japan. Manjiro's coming of age also includes his first crush on a girl. Because they are two different races, Manjiro's crush never comes to fruition because of the racism and prejudice of the people in his town in Massachusetts.



## Family

Family is the central theme throughout the entire novel. This is because the storyline is about the lives of Manjiro's two families—his Japanese one and his American one. While every family has their trials and tribulations, Manjiro's families have its own family dynamics that are the same and that are different from those of other families. In the end though, they are a family and they will get through it together, one way or the other.

By the end of the novel, it also becomes about the family of those that have come together in Manjiro's life. While the different characters in the novel have been segregated in the past, they unite by the end of the novel. The coming together of the different groups is symbolic of the world in which the characters live breaking down the cultural barriers.



# Style

## Point of View

"Heart of a Samurai" is written in the third person point of view. The narrator of the novel is also the author of the novel. The narrator is telling the story as it unfolds, but she also switches back to some past events to provide the reader with some perspective.

The point of view of "Heart of a Samurai" is an intimate point of view that allows a reader to connect closely with each of the characters in the novel. The point of view also allows the author to inject her own opinions into the narration and to expand on the events taking place to her and the characters of the novel without interrupting the flow of the narration. For these reasons, the point of view works well with this novel and the author's writing style.

## Setting

When the novel first begins, the primary setting is in the waters off Japan. The setting then moves to Bird Island, the John Howland, Oahu, Massachusetts and some other islands where the ship docks. Eventually, the setting returns to Japan. The novel starts in 1841 and ends in 1852. The setting of this novel is important because it is about the drastic differences in culture between the Japanese and Americans, especially during this time period.

The setting of this novel works well with the plot. At first, the reader is not aware that Manjiro ends up living in America. However, as events unfold, Manjiro's struggle between being Japanese and being American is a constant part of the plot.

## Language and Meaning

The language of "Heart of a Samurai" is not formal, but also includes Japanese words. The language is educated, strong and descriptive enough that it creates a flow that leaves the reader impressed with the words as much as the plot when the novel ends.

The language of the novel is appropriate to the plot because it is accurate to the characters in the novel and the education level of the writer. The novel is not in love with its own words, but it is descriptive enough that the reader finds enjoyment in the words as well as the plot. The language is not difficult to understand, however, and everything is clear in its context. For this reason the language of the novel fits well with the plot of the novel.

## Structure

The novel consists of 41 chapters and an epilogue. Each chapter is anywhere from five to 10 pages long. The chapters tell the story both in exposition and dialogue. The author is the narrator of the book, so it seems as if she is injecting her own voice throughout the novel. This allows the author to provide her own opinions of the events surrounding the setting of the novel, as well as the actions taking place within the plot.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows the various relationships between the characters in the novel. The subplots involve coming of age and the trials and tribulations of the family.



## Quotes

"I had hoped to become a samurai."  
Chap. 1, p. 5

"Boats! Rescue!"  
Chap. 2, p. 22

"One of those pots is big enough to fit us both!"  
Chap. 3, p. 35

"Lad, you were born for this work!"  
Chap. 4, p. 47

"Thank you for reminding me of things I should not forget."  
Chap. 5, p. 56

"I can't afford to lose the John Howland or jeopardize my men."  
Chap. 6, p. 62

"It is land of wonders the mates tell me."  
Chap. 7, p. 70

"I think it means that we can do great things in our lives—things people will remember."  
Chap. 8, p. 76

"Surely you have seen enough ocean by now to understand that the world is bigger than you have imagined."  
Chap. 9, p. 981

"If you'd bother to learn English, things would go better for you."  
Chap. 10, p. 87

"There's always going to be someone like Jolly, anywhere we go. At least I know this one."  
Chap. 11, p. 95



"Now that you are a crew member, he'll treat you the same as the others, I suspect."  
Chap. 12, p. 99

"You're a lucky charm."  
Chap. 13 p. 103

"That is interesting because we call this two-hour period of time the 'dog watch.'  
Chap. 14, p 114

"You deserve a proper upbringing, John, and you shall have it.  
Chap. 15, p. 128

"If you went back to Japan would you be a samurai?"  
Chap. 16, p. 134

"I hope we live to see the day when such notions are abolished—along with our country's deplorable institution of slavery."  
Chap. 17, p. 140

"—and you can't get into any mischief."  
Chap. 18, p. 144

"I see we have a magician in our midst."  
Chap. 19, p. 151

"Is someone bullying you, John?"  
Chap. 20, p. 157

"Fall down seven times, get up eight."  
Chap. 21, p. 161

"I fell. So what?"  
Chap. 22, p. 171

"Someday, when you are grown, you will come and visit me in Japan."  
Chap. 23, p. 175



"Your parents would never allow it. think what people would say!"  
Chap. 24, p. 181

"You're home now, John."  
Chap. 25, p. 186

"We're not too far out for ye to disembark. Fer yer own good, I'd recommend it."  
Chap.26, p. 196

"It's just a simple message for my mother."  
Chap. 27, p. 205

"By jiminy, if you try that again, you'll be punished for desertion! You hear me?"  
Chap. 28, p. 206

"Why are you listening to this silly story, child? You'll drown if you don't let go and swim."  
Chap. 29, p. 212

"We aim to take control of this vessel."  
Chap. 30, p.215

"I was with him the first time he went out on a whale chase, on board the John Howland."  
Chap. 31, p. 223

"Now...give it to him!"  
Chap. 32. p. 225

"William Henry was stricken with fever and died some time ago."  
Chap. 33, p. 232

"You'll come back rich!"  
Chap. 34, p. 236

"Fool's gold!"  
Chap. 35, p. 242





"And the men that have come to arrest us."  
Chap. 36, p. 251

"They say we are spies!"  
Chap. 37, p. 254

"But I believe good will come out of this changing world."  
Chap. 38, p. 262

"It's whispered there will be civil war here. And perhaps war with the West."  
Chap. 39, p. 265

"These shells are like the people of the world, Okachan. They come from many different places. They come in many different colors and sizes. But they are all beautiful."  
Chap. 40, p. 271

"Imagine—a simple fisherman becoming a samurai!"  
Chap. 41, p. 274

"Nonetheless, he went on to achieve many things in his lifetime."  
Epilogue, p. 276

## Topics for Discussion

Who is Manjiro? Why is he so anxious to learn English and everything he can while onboard the John Howland? What does Manjiro recall about his life before leaving Japan? Why is this important? How does it change his life?

Discuss the relationship between Manjiro and Goemon. Are they friends or something else? Is there guilt or a sense of obligation in their relationship? How does Manjiro feel about Goemon? How does Goemon feel about Manjiro?

Discuss the relationship between Manjiro and Captain Whitfield. Are they friends or something else? Is there guilt or a sense of obligation in their relationship? How does Manjiro feel about Captain Whitfield? How does Captain Whitfield feel about Manjiro?

Who is the true Captain Whitfield? Why does he want Manjiro to come live with him? Why does the captain give up sailing? Do you think the captain and Manjiro feel a father-son bond?

Who is Tom? Why does he continuously torment Manjiro? What happens after the race? Do you think Tom's life changes now that everyone knows how his father is?

Why do you think Manjiro wants to return to Japan? Do you think relations between the two countries would have changed if Manjiro didn't return to Japan? Why does Manjiro become a samurai? Do you think he felt guilty about leaving his family in Japan or about leaving his family in America?

Discuss the cultural differences in the novel. What impact it have on the characters of the novel? How does it motivate them or hold them back?