

Whitemen

Explorers in a Strange Land

William Bedford

Illustrated by Chris Molan



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Illustrated by **Chris Molan**

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U.S. edit by **Alison Auch**

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This American Edition of *Whitemen*, originally published in England in 2003, is published by arrangement with Oxford University Press.

08 07 06 05 04
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Published by

Pacific Learning

P.O. Box 2723

Huntington Beach, CA 92647-0723

www.pacificlearning.com

ISBN: 1-59055-450-7

PL-7615

Printed in China.

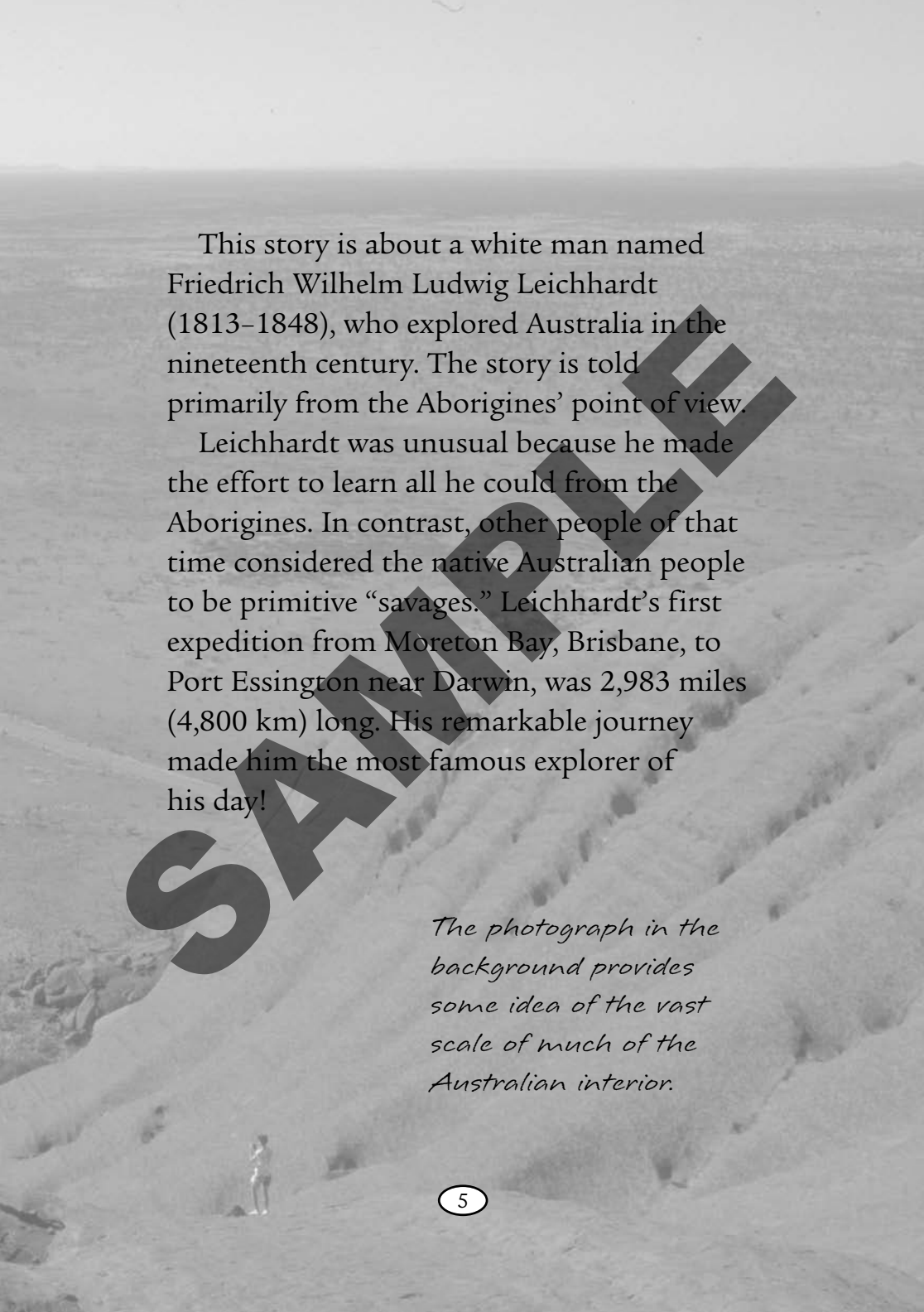
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Introduction

The vast **subcontinent** of Australia was a mystery to the European white men who arrived there in the eighteenth century.

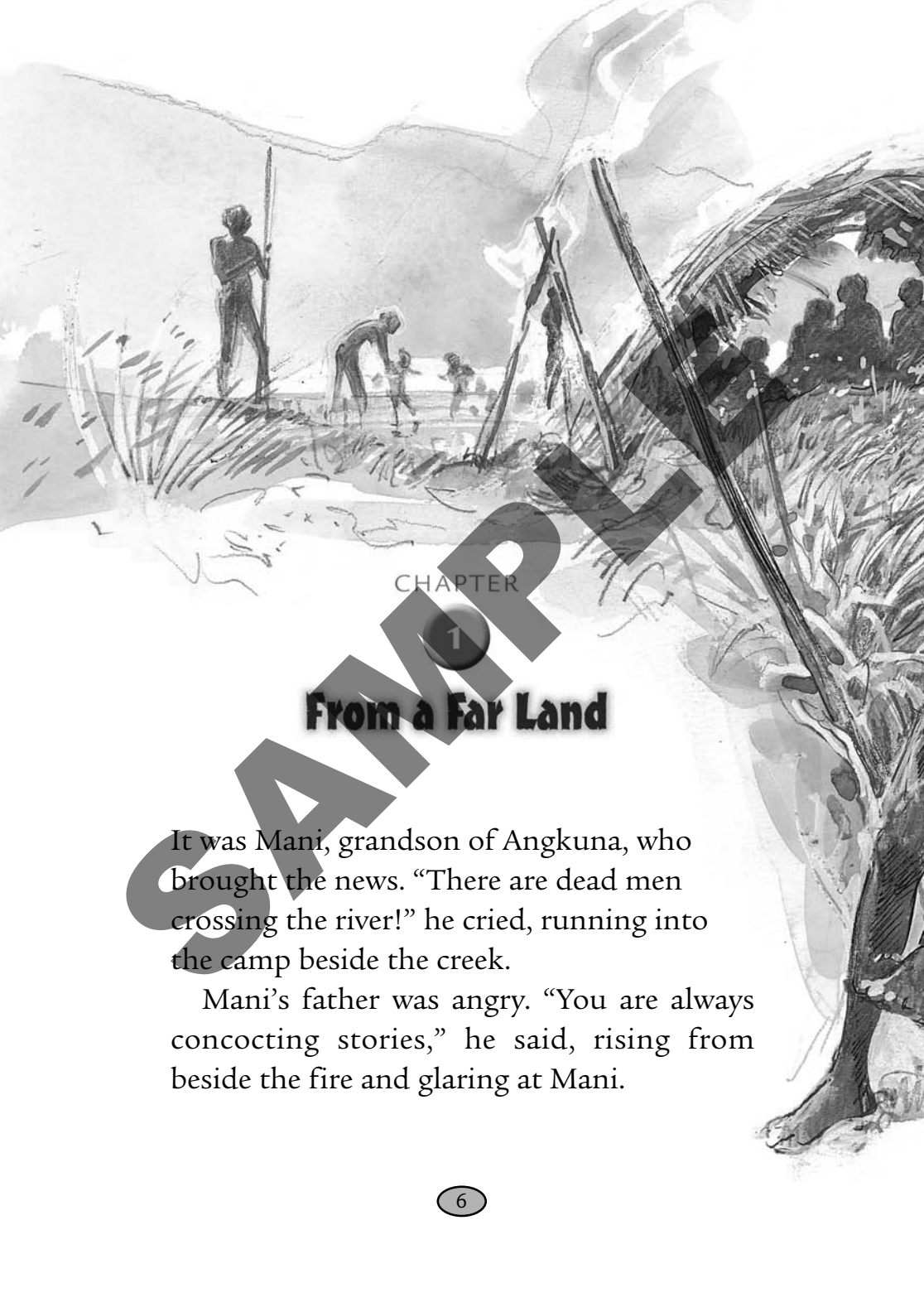
To the **nomadic Aboriginal** people who lived there, these white men were equally mysterious. For them, the color white was associated with death. In fact, the Aborigines thought the first white men were their dead who had come back to visit their ancestral lands.



This story is about a white man named Friedrich Wilhelm Ludwig Leichhardt (1813–1848), who explored Australia in the nineteenth century. The story is told primarily from the Aborigines’ point of view.

Leichhardt was unusual because he made the effort to learn all he could from the Aborigines. In contrast, other people of that time considered the native Australian people to be primitive “savages.” Leichhardt’s first expedition from Moreton Bay, Brisbane, to Port Essington near Darwin, was 2,983 miles (4,800 km) long. His remarkable journey made him the most famous explorer of his day!

The photograph in the background provides some idea of the vast scale of much of the Australian interior.



CHAPTER

1

From a Far Land

It was Mani, grandson of Angkuna, who brought the news. “There are dead men crossing the river!” he cried, running into the camp beside the creek.

Mani’s father was angry. “You are always concocting stories,” he said, rising from beside the fire and glaring at Mani.