

When authors write new stories, they often borrow ideas from older works of fiction, such as myths and other traditional stories. Authors borrow certain elements of fiction—types of characters and events as well as themes and messages—and present them in a new context. Good readers can notice these text-to-text connections and compare the elements across new and old works of fiction. As you read and make connections between new and old stories, think about these elements.

- **Characters:** Do the characters have similar qualities? Are their actions similar?
- **Setting:** Do the stories take place in similar settings?
- **Plot:** Are there similar events? Do these events mean the same thing?
- **Theme or Message:** Is there a lesson that both stories are trying to teach? Is there a bigger message that both stories are trying to communicate?

Remember: Writers are including ideas from older works of fiction in new contexts. Sometimes the elements may be exactly the same across two stories. However, usually they are mostly the same. So, think deeply about the similarities.

Read “Conquering Fear,” a traditional tale from Ethiopia. Then reread “Bearing Up” in Student’s Book Unit 4, pages 204–207. Analyze how “Bearing Up” draws on elements from “Conquering Fear.”

Conquering Fear

retold by Kirsten Thompson

In a small village in Ethiopia lived a boy called Miobe. Miobe means “frightened one,” and this boy was terrified of anything and everything around him.

Curious about his name, one day Miobe asked his grandmother, “Grandmother, why am I called Miobe?”

“Because you’re afraid of everything in this world,” replied his grandmother, laughing. Everyone in Miobe’s life—his grandparents, his parents, and even his neighbors—agreed.

Miobe’s grandmother’s words echoed in his head. I must conquer my fears, he thought to himself. So, that night, while everyone was asleep, Miobe gathered a few belongings and set off into the countryside.

Later, wrapped up in his blanket, Miobe stared at the shimmering stars scattered across the night sky. “I will be courageous,” Miobe promised himself as he drifted off to sleep.

Owooooo...Owooooo... The sound of howling wolves soon filled the still night air and startled Miobe awake. Frightened, Miobe’s first instinct was to run back to his village. But instead, he decided to walk deeper into the night. “I will be courageous,” Miobe reminded himself.

Miobe walked until the sun began to rise and the stars faded into the pale blue morning sky. With every step he took, he felt braver and braver. Soon he came upon a village. Miobe worried that the villagers might not welcome a stranger into their world. But he walked straight into the village anyway, telling himself, “I will be courageous.”

Miobe reached the village square where saw a group of elders gathered in a circle, whispering among themselves. As he approached the men, they began to eye Miobe with suspicion. “Who are you?” one of them asked, sneering at Miobe.

“I’m Miobe, and I’m learning how to be courageous,” he replied.

"Foolish boy!" the elders laughed. "There's no courage to be found here."

"I don't understand," Miobe responded, feeling confused.

"Our whole village lives in fear," said one of the men.

"But why?" Miobe asked.

"See that mountain over there?" the man continued, pointing to a nearby mountaintop. "A monster up on that mountain is threatening our village."

Miobe stared hard at the mountain, but he couldn't see anything that resembled a monster.

"Can't you see it?" asked another man. "It's as enormous as a hippopotamus, with a head and teeth like a crocodile!"

A third man cried, "And it breathes fire from its snout, just like a dragon! It's a terrible creature."

Suddenly, Miobe saw the horrible monster with its hideous eyes, razor-sharp teeth, and wrinkled snout, breathing its smoke and fire into the sky.

"I see it now," Miobe replied calmly, reminding himself to be courageous. He decided to leave the elders and have a look around the village.

Everywhere Miobe went, people were frightened of the monster on the mountain. Children stayed home and refused to go to school, terrified of becoming the monster's next meal. Farmers avoided planting their crops, milking their cows, or tending their animals, afraid that the monster would snatch them from their fields. Almost everyone remained indoors, worried that the monster would destroy the village at any moment.

"Enough is enough," Miobe declared. "I will be courageous and slay the monster!"

The elders gasped. "Don't do it, young man!" they cried. "The monster will have you for a snack. You will surely die."

Miobe felt a sharp bolt of fear surge through his body. But he was determined, so he set off toward the mountain anyway.

At the base of the mountain, Miobe gazed up toward the top and saw that the monster looked even larger and more terrifying than before. His heart was racing, and this throat felt tight, but he remembered his own words, "I will be courageous." Closing his eyes, Miobe took a deep breath and started to climb the mountain.

As Miobe ascended higher and higher, the monster seemed to become smaller and smaller. He could barely believe his eyes. Where were the razor-sharp teeth? Where were the flames shooting into the sky? Miobe wondered. But Miobe still felt a twinge of fear, frightened by the thought of what he might encounter at the top.

When Miobe reached the summit, he was shocked to find nothing there. All was peaceful and quiet. But Miobe moved very slowly, looking in every direction, certain the monster would attack him from behind. But he still saw nothing.

Suddenly, Miobe heard a faint sound from around his feet. Looking down, he noticed a tiny, wrinkly toad staring up at him with big, frightened eyes. "How can you be the monster that terrifies everyone? You are so small!" Miobe said to the toad. But the toad didn't reply. Miobe picked up the tiny creature and carried it down the mountain.

"He's alive!" the people shouted, running to meet Miobe as he entered the village.

"Here is your terrifying monster," Miobe said, showing them the little creature in his hand.

"What is your name?" asked one of the elders. The toad replied with a little croak. Facing the group of villagers, the elder said, "Miobe has caught the monster, and its name is fear."

For use with Lift Student's Book Level 3 Unit 4 page 207.

Use the chart to compare the elements of the two stories.

	New Story: <i>Bearing Up</i>	Traditional Tale: <i>Conquering Fear</i>	
Element	Details	Details	Similarities
Characters			
Setting			
Plot			
Theme or Message			