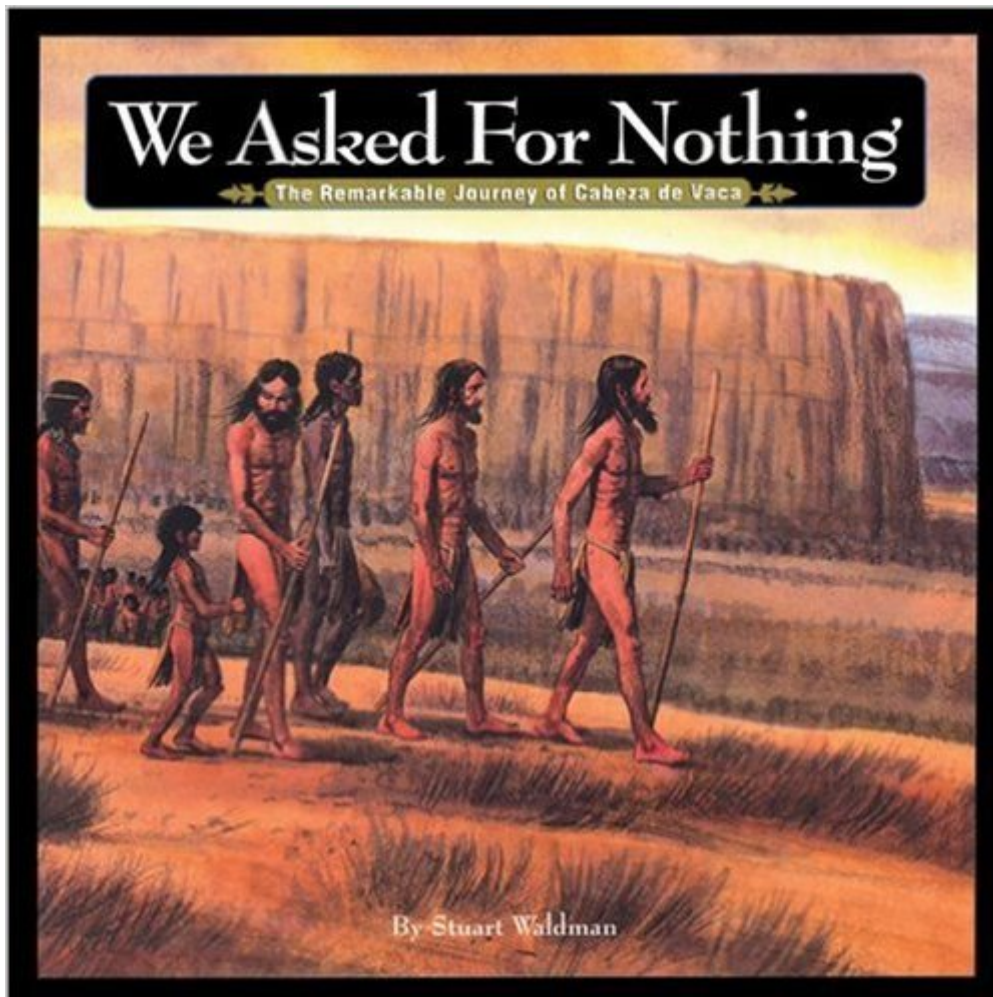


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# We Asked For Nothing: The Remarkable Journey Of Cabeza De Vaca (Great Explorers)



## Synopsis

The explorer who discovered his own humanity. In 1528, the conquistador Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca escaped a hostile reception in Florida only to be shipwrecked off the coast of Texas. For the next eight years, he lived among the native tribes of the Southwest while he journeyed towards the safety of the Spanish settlements in Mexico. He and three companions survived starvation, sickness and slavery thanks to the generosity of native peoples along the way. When Cabeza de Vaca finally reached the Spanish, he was a changed man and led the struggle against the feudal-like exploitation of the New World populations. Stuart Waldman tells the fascinating story of two journeys: one covering 2,500 miles through unexplored territory, the other the transformation of a man's heart. Excerpts from Cabeza de Vaca's journals make the reader's immersion into this mystifying world complete. The gatefold map allows the reader to follow the journey while reading.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1020L (What's this?)

Series: Great Explorers

Hardcover: 48 pages

Publisher: Mikaya Press; First Edition edition (September 6, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1931414076

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Product Dimensions: 10.3 x 10.4 x 0.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,405,166 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #49 in [Books > Children's](#)

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[Education & Reference > History > Exploration & Discovery](#) #3639 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

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Age Range: 9 - 13 years

Grade Level: 4 - 8

## Customer Reviews

We Asked for Nothing is a picture book written at a fifth grade reading level or above. It deals with serious issues such as racism, prejudice, slavery, starvation, religious faith and survival. I felt very comfortable reading it side by side with my first grade son in a Guided Reading context, but it

wouldn't be appropriate to just hand this book over to an advanced six year old and say "Have at it." Discussing the material is key. A nice feature of the book is that quotes from Cabeza de Vaca's original text are inserted throughout the story, so that children get a chance to experience the primary source. The illustrations in this book are beautiful, and I can't help but wonder if I would have remembered what I read back in college better if I had also had access to the children's version of Cabeza de Vaca's story! If you are from Texas or the Gulf Coast *We Asked for Nothing* would be even more meaningful for you because it talks extensively about the Native American tribes who lived in that area. All of those peoples were unfamiliar to me: the Karankawa, the Queuene, the Chorroco, the Deaguane, the Mendica etc., I had never learning anything about them before. Neither had the Spanish Conquistadors, until Cabeza de Vaca had the courage to find out. Unfortunately, I believe that *We Asked for Nothing* is now out of print. I had to order my copy as a discarded library book. It's worth taking the effort to acquire this book either through borrowing it from your own library or ordering it used if you are at all interested in the history of Explorers or Native Americans. *We Asked for Nothing* really solidified a lot my son learned from listening to Susan Wise Bauer's *Story of the World* series.

Before reading this book, I had never heard of Cabeza de Vaca. His story is one of the few about a European explorer who found the heart and soul of the people of the New World (basically Mexico) and he never betrayed them. De Vaca came to the New World in search of gold, even though King Charles V charged him with making certain the indigenous people were being treated properly. Various circumstances brought him & his shipmates to the point where they were near starvation and had to put the ship ashore. The area on which they landed was populated by the Karankawa Indians. The tribe's people treated them with great kindness. Through this experience (and others like it), de Vaca came to love and respect the people of the various tribes he encountered as his equals. He experienced the ultimate paradigm shift. He no longer thought as a European and Spaniard when dealing with the people of the New World. He regarded them not as savages beneath his rank, but as a fellow human beings. For that time period, this was an amazing change of heart and mind: "Like all people, some were good, some were evil, some were cruel, some were kind, but there was one thing of which Cabeza de Vaca was now certain: Indians were human beings, children of God, and not animals to be bought and sold." (p. 36) De Vaca and his men became know as healers and they became famous among the tribes inhabiting Mexico. Where ever they traveled they were asked to heal and the indigenous people attested to their abilities to do so. This exciting narrative will inspire children and adults to learn more about this European explorer

who, although entirely human, broke the mold of his day.

There's not much to add to the great reviews already posted, but I wanted to give it another 5 stars rating. As a Catholic home schooling family, we try to find books like this: accurate history, in-depth coverage, beautiful illustrations, and agenda-less. Imagine an author actually writing about a kind conquistador, who healed the native peoples by making the sign of the cross on their foreheads and praying. We also enjoyed the book on Henry Hudson in this series and look forward to reading the one on Vasco de Gama.

Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca arrived in Florida as the Treasurer of an expedition of Spanish Conquistadores. Through bad luck and folly, he ended up on an epic nine year journey that took him Tampa Bay Florida to Sonora, Mexico. Cabeza de Vaca long trek is a story of great suffering, persistence and personal redemption. His transformation from a callow would be conqueror to a man of great depth and feeling is both remarkable and inspiring. This book is part of the Mikaya Press, "Great Explorers" series. I have read a number of books in the series and they have all been well written and a pleasure to read. Yet, of all the great figures written about in this series, Cabeza de Vaca is my favorite. The story of an accidental explorer feels the most modern and relevant. Highly recommended.

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