

Aloha And Mai Tais

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ISBN: 1-4010-4731-9

Published 2002 by Xlibris
<http://www.xlibris.com>

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2002

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Chapter 1

Atherton Scully

I sighed deeply as I stood and surveyed the expensive, polished marble bust of my half-uncle Damon Scully in the prestigious Honolulu cemetery. It was 1932 in the United States Territory of Hawaii and Damon Scully had been dead for ten years. But to me his voice had never been completely stilled. I sighed as I could swear I could hear him calling me “Boy” from below the carefully cultivated grass of his plot.

There were very few things that I had ever done in my life that had managed to please Uncle Damon when he was living. And now he was hounding me from the grave. I certainly had not been pleasing him for the last ten years. I had not only failed to regain a position of power in one of the “Big Five” companies that controlled ninety-nine percent of Hawaii’s business but I had already lost over half of the money he had left to my wife and his daughter Jessica.

I was still one of the wealthiest persons in Honolulu thanks to my wife who had inherited her father’s and my uncle’s fortune. Unfortunately the money was in the grasp of Jessica’s well-manicured, red nails and she wouldn’t free it anymore for risky business ventures. Risky business ventures were the only kind of business ventures I could take part in thanks to my blacklisting ten years previously by Honolulu’s notorious business oligarchy.

The oligarchy controlled Hawaii’s land, business, and power. It consisted of descendents of the Calvinist missionaries who convinced Hawaii’s King

Kamehameha III to put all the land in the Islands up for grabs in 1850. The missionaries, of course, took full advantage of the greatest land bargain sale in the history of western civilization. Native Hawaiians, who had no western coinage and no way of earning it lost everything. Missionary descendents and other avaricious westerners turned the Islands into a giant sugar-cane plantation. Not satisfied with owning all the land, the “Missionary Party,” as deposed Queen Lili`uokalani, liked to refer to them, grabbed what was left of Sovereignty in Hawaii in 1893 by overthrowing a legal Constitutional Monarch using the gunpower of the United States and the political power of its Minister.

My wife was a rarity. She was a highly-sexed beauty in an age where Honolulu society matrons, most of whom were missionary descendents, still recoiled in horror from the subject of men’s favorite activity. I was eternally thankful for such a physical woman. But I could not believe in the change to Jessica’s personality since her father’s death. Before his demise and my firing by Honolulu’s foremost entrepreneur, and particularly after my last three failed business deals, she had left all the business details to me. Now she questioned me incessantly about even trivial matters concerning our finances. I had been noticing recently that she was becoming more and more like her dead father all the time.

Sometimes, to my absolute horror, the old man, himself, seemed to be speaking through Jessica’s facial expressions and voice.

I glanced at Damon Scully’s epitaph at the base of his statue.

“Sugar Is King In Hawaii,” I read aloud to Jessica. My wife looked very desirable in the tropical lushness of the cemetery that day. She was dressed in a fashionably-tight, Hawaiian print dress that accented her voluptuous figure perfectly. Her flaming, red hair had still not greyed and I knew she looked much younger than myself with my already greying sideburns. I looked for a hiding spot where I could demonstrate my amorous longings. Several risky, business ventures since my firing had failed and my failures were generalizing over to my prowess in bed. Recently I hadn’t been in the mood and Jessica was asking me what the trouble was.

“Maybe behind that mausoleum,” I speculated. “Damn, there’s someone tending the anthuriums.” I returned my thoughts to Uncle Damon’s epitaph.

“Sugar Is King In Hawaii. No one understood this better than Damon Scully, Jan. 13, 1836 to Jan. 21, 1922. His distinguished career led to the triumph of the sugar-cane industry in Hawaii and many of it’s finest accomplishments.”

“No doubt dictated by Uncle Damon himself, eh Dear?” I said sarcastically as I, at least, recognized the arrogance in her father’s epitaph. However, Jessica seemed to miss my sarcasm completely. I gasped as her facial expression reminded me of the one her dead father used when he was about to set me straight.

“Of course, Atherton,” she replied. My ears shrieked. “How can she sound just like him?” I thought, gasping.

“My father never doubted for one moment his mission in life. He always felt he was predestined to take the lands of an inferior race and make them more productive. How well he succeeded. If only you could be more like him, Boy.”

I reeled. She had called me “Boy.” The only people in the world that ever addressed me by that insulting term was old Damon and my former business partner Michael Bridgewater. Jessica knew how much I hated it when either one of them used to call me “Boy.”

“What do you mean, Jessica? “You want me to be more like your father?” I stood up and sucked in the slight pot around my middle. I’d been much too sedentary lately, I realized.

“Why I’m sure our prestigious mansion and our extensive land holdings on the Islands are evidence of worth in the eyes of the Divine? Aren’t they evidence of worthiness in the eyes of my wife?” Jessica was an avowed Congregationalist. I tried to use the Church’s line that material signs of wealth were a sure sign of adoption into the elite destined for Heaven.

“Oh, for Heaven’s sake, Atherton. You’ve been so sensitive lately. That all started when my old beaux, Michael Bridgewater fired you ten years ago. I only wish you had even one-quarter of my father’s self-confidence. You would think it would run in the family, even if you were only father’s half-nephew.”

“Many would have said that your father was arrogant, Jessica, not self-confident.”

“Don’t you dare criticize my father, Atherton. I’m beginning to think that it was only his advice that made us as wealthy as we are. You certainly haven’t contributed anything to our income since Michael Bridgewater fired you. As a matter of fact you’ve managed to lose half of our wealth in your preposterous business ventures. How can you go on kidding yourself? Look how you’ve withdrawn from public view ever since the last business failure.”

My heart sank as Jessica’s criticism stung deeply. I hadn’t realised my wife was tiring of the self-doubt I’d been experiencing since my well-connected business partner of twenty years had dumped me and everything I had touched since had collapsed.

“If only you would support me in this new business venture, Dear,” I tried to stop her accusing voice. I couldn’t look at her facial expressions. If Jessica turned on me too, I realised I would be finished financially. Most of our remaining wealth was in her name.

“If only it was clear what line of business to go into now, Atherton. So much has changed since the stock market crash. As you know, Michael Bridgewater has

managed to keep you out of the lucrative business investment scene in Honolulu. It's incredible how one man has so much power."

Fear shot through my spine as my wife reacted by staring hostilely at me.

"She's looking at me just like her father again. Just before he would ask: "You stupid or something, Boy?" I went into some kind of severe reaction. For the first time I was realising how much like her father Jessica was.

"You stupid or something, Boy? Get that silly look off your face." I reeled. It was like *deja vu*. For over twenty years I'd put up with Damon Scully and Michael Bridgewater, my business partner berating me like a common cur. Now my wife seemed to be filling the void of their absences. Despite the eighty-three degree heat and the tropical humidity the blood drained from my face.

"If only you would let me make one final investment, Jessica," I whined.

"No wonder my father left everything in my name?" I couldn't bear to look directly in my wife's eyes. They looked eerily like her fathers. "Your failed business ventures have lost millions."

"Let me invest in that luxury hotel in Waikiki, the "Tropical Paradise, Jessica." I tried again to convince my wife to back me in another venture.

"You know that The Tropical Palace Hotel has gone into receivership, don't you, Dear? God knows that Theodore Wiltshire's been phoning me for weeks now about it. It can be had for ten cents on the dollar. And besides, Theodore's one of the few oldtime businessmen that will speak to me."

"We need to buy into that hotel while we can, Jessica. I bet we can get a controlling interest for one-tenth of what it's really worth."

"What makes you think that's such a good investment, Boy?" I gasped as I could swear that Damon Scully's voice was coming through my wife's throat. I knew I had to get my normal control of my wife back. Before her father's death she had never questioned anything I did.

"Some say that tourism will be flat until the depression on the Mainland is over, Boy. Besides, I'm beginning to think that maybe father was right all those years ago - that you really don't have much of a backbone. But maybe you do have something this time?" Jessica looked like she just remembered something she had heard lately.

"Strike while the iron is hot, Father always said. Maybe you are right this time, Atherton? Michael Bridgewater himself, told me he is thinking of financing that hotel. You know he's the leading entrepreneur in Honolulu today. Look at his track record. Everything he's touched has turned to gold. Michael says that tourism is going to be the rage now that larger steamships like that new liner the Malolo are available to bring passengers from the Mainland."

"When did Bridgewater tell you that Jessica?" I couldn't believe she was still in contact with the scoundrel.

“How do you know what he’s going to invest in?”

My worst fears shot to the surface. “Maybe she and Bridgewater, my ex-partner, were becoming lovers again,” I thought with a growing feeling of despair. I knew my former boss had never completely lost his fondness for the woman I had stolen from him. Every so often he and Jessica developed a discreet affair.

“Surely she has more loyalty towards me than that?” My thoughts galloped off into paranoia. “I never thought my own wife would be civil to Bridgewater again after what he did.” Jessica must have sensed my thoughts. Her voice rose even more.

“Really Atherton, you can’t expect me to avoid Michael and his wife. Why they’re the cream of the crop of Honolulu society. Just because you lack a backbone and have gone into some kind of retreat from the world don’t expect me to come along with you and lie cowering. I have our children to think of as well as my reputation.”

“Remember, we’re still one of the wealthiest families in Honolulu thanks to Father. Pull yourself together, for God’s sake, Boy. Maybe you are right that we should get in on the tourist boom that’s hitting Waikiki before it’s too late. Our children deserve the careers and lifestyles they’re entitled to even if their father was publicly humiliated and hasn’t managed to keep a new business venture running for any more than two years since.”

I sighed deeply “It’s the children she’s thinking of,” I decided, “not her old beaux.” But I knew the risk of what I was proposing to Jessica was huge.

“What if I fail again?” I worried. “Why it could be years before big money would be made out of tourism.”

Jessica must have sensed my hesitation.

“Atherton,” she reasoned. “If I go into that hui for the new Hotel in Waikiki we’ll have to sink in all our capital. We might even have to float a loan if the Hotel can’t be expected to make a profit for the first while. We would have to mortgage our house and my property on the Islands. We could lose everything we own. Are you sure you want me to invest more of our money? Shouldn’t we just be satisfied with the enormous rental income we get from our real-estate investments?”

“Risk is how your relatives and Bridgewaters got to be where they are today, Jessica,” I argued. “Your father always floated loans for his enterprises. How do you think he accumulated the fortune he did. By investing in Government bonds or something?”

I was having a hard time convincing Jessica. I realised myself I wasn’t sure I wanted to go into as big a gamble as the Tropical Palace venture would demand. But my ego was spurring me on. It wouldn’t let me relax. I had to prove myself in business again. “The only time I had ever been completely happy was when I had

been hopelessly embroiled in Michael Bridgewater's business gambles," I thought. I tried to think of another way to get Jessica to come up with some of our reserve capital.

"I'll try reverse Psychology," I thought. I decided to take advantage of my wife's enculturation about the inferiority of Native Hawaiians. She was one of the most condemning missionary descendents I had ever come into contact with.

"But maybe you are right about this investment, Dear," I tried to keep my voice casual. "Maybe tourism isn't the way to go," I switched my tactics. "Why, Iwana Keaka assures me that the growth of the tourist industry in the Islands is one more nail in the coffin of Hawaii's original people and their culture. He says that the portrayal of Hawaiian women as scantily-clad, sexually alluring sirens in the tourist literature is insulting. And that the expectation that Hawaiian men are fit to be no more than surfers, porters, and beach boys is severely limiting the upward mobility of Hawaiians."

My words seemed to incense my wife.

"Iwana Keaka, that left-over, Hawaiian coutier from King Kalakaua's time, you're listening to him!" she shouted. "When did you become a Kanaka lover, Boy? This is the last straw! Scullys would turn over in their graves if they realised the man my father encouraged me to marry was turning soft on Hawaiians."

"You're taking your business losses too hard, Atherton, if you ask me," she added suddenly, tears coming into her eyes. It was like the old man's presence had suddenly left her.

She came close and embraced me closely. I kissed her willingly. It seemed so long since we had made love. I hadn't been feeling up to it since my last business venture failed.

"Believe me, I know how you feel," she said to my astonishment. It was like my wife had two personalities or something.

"It was devastating to me, too, when you lost your position with Michael's firm, and when you failed in these last three ventures. But maybe this time it would be different. If we can get in on the ground floor with this latest investment we might have a chance to become as wealthy as the Bridgewaters, or close to it, anyway."

I kissed Jessica again. She responded with some of her long-standing passion and I felt myself become empowered. My libido seemed to be roaring awake from a long slumber."

"Let's go home and make love for the rest of the day," I suggested. "The plumeria trees are blooming in the solarium and I'll send the servants out on errands."

"Provided you agree we should invest in the hotel Darling," I added. "You know I always come alive when I'm in a risky business venture." All doubts about

the investment seemed to disappear from my mind. My body was responding passionately for the first time in months.

“I’ll call Theodore in the morning, Jessica, and ask him how much we would need to get in on that hotel hui.” I moved Jessica towards the car.

“But what about your poor Hawaiians and their disappearing culture, Atherton?”

“Forget I ever said those words, Darling. Iwana is probably going senile, anyway. What does he know? Surely what’s good for tourism is good for Hawaii and Hawaiians. Besides maybe we can add a little hula in for the tourists at the hotel, as long as we don’t have to listen to that boring chanting that goes along with it. That should be enough culture for Iwana.”

“You’re sounding more like Father all the time Atherton. Stop by the liquor store on the way. I want to pick up some Martini mix. We’ll make love just like the old days. Remember when you first met me, that moonlight swim off the Moana Hotel. Let’s do the same tonight. It’s a full moon.” I snuggled close to Jessica as the chauffeur drove us home.

“I don’t want you spending any more time with that old Hawaiian courtier, Atherton.” Jessica ordered. I nodded in agreement. “I don’t think he’s a good influence on you at all.”

“Whatever you say, Dear,” I replied, hoping to reach home before my libido faded again. I’d been worried I’d lost it forever.

* * *

Chapter 2

Investment Gamble

The next morning I made a call to Theodore Wiltshire. Jessica beamed at me approvingly. I felt like a new man. We had spent the entire night making love.

“All right Atherton, I’ll take one final chance on your business sense or lack of it,” my dear wife had informed me in the morning. “But fail yet again and I’m going to replace you with someone who is more like my father.” I ignored my wife’s warning.

“She can’t be serious,” I thought. “After close to thirty years.”

As I picked up the receiver a long-lost pain shot through my belly. I smiled in ecstasy. It was the start of the adrenaline high I used to experience daily running Bridgewater’s many enterprises.

“It’s been too long,” I sighed. I felt years lifting off my age as the thought of a new business gamble filled me with energy.

“Aloha, Theodore Wiltshire, please? Atherton Scully, speaking.” I shot into the mouthpiece. His secretary put me right through.

“Atherton, I’ve been trying to reach you for days,” Wiltshire spoke into the phone with his staccato-like voice. “You’re missing out on the investment of a lifetime. I can get you an interest in the new Hotel hui for the Tropical Palace Hotel for one tenth of its actual value.”

“That’s why I’m calling Theodore. Give me the low-down on the investment will you?” Jessica has agreed we should get in on the bottom floor. I’ve convinced

her you've got a winner, there."

"Smart Lady, your wife! Just like her old man, if you ask me. That's one of the reasons I want you in this venture. Rumor has it that your wife's inherited the business know-how of old Damon."

I cringed. "Damn it," I thought. "Jessica has more respect from the business community than I do. Bridgewater must be maligning me all over Honolulu. Irritation revived the doubts I had about the hotel scheme. I tried to find out more about it.

"Look, Theodore, I'm not completely convinced about this deal. What makes you fellows so sure this Hotel is going to be a winner anyway?"

"You wonder about the Tropical Palace Hotel, Atherton. Why it's the most luxurious hotel this side of Los Vegas. Besides you know that new liner, the Malolo. Malolo means flying fish in Hawaiian. That steamer's some flying fish all right. It's cut the distance between Los Angeles and Honolulu by three days."

"What's the Malolo got to do with it, Theodore?"

"Everything, Atherton." Wiltshire's voice sounded exasperated. Why that steamship can transport hundreds of the mainland's elite at a time. Not to mention the rich and famous from Europe, Asia and the Commonwealth. That should take care of the low accommodations rentals that took the Tropical into receivership."

"So what makes you think the Malolo's passengers are going to stay at the Tropical Palace, Theodore? The other Waikiki hotel's been capturing the rich crowd all these years. Look how quick the Tropical Palace went into receivership with the stock market crash. The other hotel is still carrying on."

Theodore gave a short laugh.

"The Tropical Paradise was under-financed, Atherton. None of the oldtime regulars were on it's Board of Directors. Ask Jessica! She'll tell you how we oldtime families run business here in Hawaii. I guess you haven't quite figured it out yet." I winced.

"We've got a contract with the Malolo sewed up. It's with the shipping line that controls the other luxury steamers, too. The Board of Directors of the shipping line, which coincidentally I'm on, has given us the exclusive for their package deals. Their cruise from San Francisco and Los Angeles now comes with three weeks at the Tropical Palace Hotel. You didn't think we'd leave anything to chance, did you?"

"So what kind of money am I looking at, Theodore?"

"Don't worry, Atherton. You can afford it. At least Jessica can. We've picked up the Tropical Palace from the Bank at a bargain basement price. We've got the hotel for ten cents on the dollar. I figure the money Jessica's got sitting from old Damon's will alone should cover your contribution. We'll give you a one-fifth

interest in the hui for that.”

“I don’t know if I want to play a long shot if it’s going to cost us that much, Theodore.” Anxiety assailed me again. What would become of us if Jessica lost everything she had inherited from her old man.

“Look Atherton, I’ll tell you what.” Wiltshire’s voice sounded a little over-eager.

“Maybe I can get the hui to sweeten the pot for you. We’re kind of in a bind. We need the balance of the financing now. We’ve got to get the hotel up and running again completely by the end of next month. The Malolo’s owners are putting on a big promotional deal. They intend to send out a boat-load of stock-market crash survivors on a big publicity push. We’ve got to show them the finest time they’ve ever had in their lives. First Class all the way.”

“What kind of deal are you talking about Theodore?”

“Rumor has it you’re after a title, Atherton, not just an investment. I know you want to get back at Michael Bridgewater for the humiliation he’s caused you by laughing at you for your last failed business venture. How would you like to be the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Tropical Palace Hotel?”

“Under new management, of course. Most prestigious hotel in all of Hawaii. That way you get to call the shots.”

I had to admit I was tempted. Bridgewater would be furious when he heard the news.

“You’ll announce my appointment in the Sunday Business Section of the paper?”

“Naturally, Atherton.”

“You’ve got a deal, Theodore.” I repressed my nagging doubts about the tourist industry in Hawaii. I’ll have the papers drawn up today, Atherton. Come down to my office on Monday with Jessica and her cheque, certified of course. We’ve got no time to lose. You’ve got to take charge of the hotel management fast. They tell me they’re a crisis with the Music Director of the hotel, of all things.”

“The Music Director?” I’ve heard everything, now. Theodore. Of all things, music is a problem?”

“Yeah, seems the steady clientele is tired of the local talent. We’ve had complaints for months.

We’ve got a replacement Music Director coming from the Mainland. One of the big band leaders from New York. It seems silly but they tell me that something has to be done about the standard of music in the ballroom. We’re going to have to come up with something with more class. Something more in line with the latest dance craze on the mainland even if it does deviate from the standard Hawaii fare offered now.”

“Don’t worry, Theodore. I’ll handle the music crisis.” I was ecstatic. The challenge of setting up a hotel in two months seemed to rev up my whole system. I thought furiously.

“What that new Music Director is going to need Theodore is some fresh talent. That group that’s been entertaining at the Tropical Palace was stolen from the other hotel years ago. They’ve grown stale. They refuse to change their musical style. Big band music is the craze now. What we need is younger, new talent. Don’t worry. I’ll put an ad in the newspaper today asking for some young blood. You can’t expect the tourists to watch the same people forever. Why, some of the local entertainers are from King Kalakaua’s time.”

“OK, Atherton. We’ll trust you to solve this latest crisis and all the others that arise before the Malolo gets here. But just remember it’s your responsibility to impress the pants off the rich and famous when they get here in less than two months.”

* * *

Chapter 3

Kimi Kai`ika

My heart swelled up with joy as I spied the answer to my big pilikia, my problem in the Classified Ads.

“New Polynesian talent wanted for existing luxury hotel under new management in Waikiki. Must be enthusiastic and available in afternoons and evenings. Substantial salary to the right parties. Audition next Monday, 3:00 p.m. at the Ballroom of the Tropical Palace Hotel.”

“If I got one of those jobs I would be able to pay the fees for teacher training after all,” I thought, my head reeling with mixed emotions. Triumph had first changed to despair as I had been unexpectedly accepted into teacher training only to realize there was no money to pay the fees. I allowed myself to start to hope again.

“After all, Felice and I have studied hula kahiko nearly all our lives.” Resentment at having to go to the demanding hula kahiko halau dance practice that my mother insisted was the duty of our family flooded my mind. She had some weird idea that our ohana had to preserve the old ways. So I was forced to spend three nights a week for all of my Elementary and High School years being driven all the way out to the Makaha Valley to learn hula Kahiko at the old heiau there. None of my friends even knew where I went all the time. The kumu hula teacher kept the location of our hula halau secret. We only came out into the open for hula kahiko

competitions.

I would have rather played with the other kids in Nanakuli instead of dancing hula Kahiko but maybe it would pay off now.

“Mother always said mastering hula kahiko would payoff big, although I don’t think she meant it to payoff financially,” I warned myself.”

“You see, Kimi,” Mother always said. “You help preserve old ways. Your Father be proud if he still live. Hula Kahiko make all ohana proud. You see.”

I reached for the phone. I could still hear the voice of Mrs. Nakamura, the teacher at the Ilawie School ringing in my ears as she congratulated Felice and me.

“Kimi Kai`ika and Felice Santos, you have made me so proud. You’re the first of my Kanaka and Portuguese students to pass the Standard English exam that allows you to enter the Territorial Normal School and become teachers.”

“We’ve passed, Mrs. Nakamura?” I’d cried out in astonishment. The Standard English exam had been incredibly hard. My Kanaka Hawaii and Portuguese friends all spoke pidgin instead of standard English. It was sort of a protest against haoles and all their put downs towards both Kanaka Hawaiians and the other people that had come to Hawaii to work the plantations. As a result I had to concentrate really hard to use standard English grammar in my written work. I had also had to use every available minute of the time allotted to pore over the multiple choice reading questions on the exam and search deep within myself to come up with answers for the essay questions.

“Explain exactly what it means to be independent,” had been the topic of the main essay. I’d had no end of trouble trying to write that one. Kanaka Hawaiians valued family affiliation over independent achievement but I sensed that the haole judges wouldn’t like that approach. But it was all right. I could stop blaming myself now for not studying harder. I had passed, after all.”

“Yes, Kimi. Take a look at the list of those who passed.” Mrs. Nakamura went to the front of the class.

“See students. It can be done, Kimi and Felice have passed the Standard English exam that let’s you go on to College level or the Territorial Normal School. Now, if the rest of you would only give up speaking that horrible pidgin you insist on speaking all the time and work harder you could become someone of importance, too.”

“Why most of you Kanakas don’t even pass the Standard English exam that allows you to go on to Grade Eight. Most of you are on Vocational Tracks 1 and II as a result. We have to put some of you in the work stream even before you are nine and ten. All because you are so stubborn and lazy. Or is it that you are all stupid like they say?”

The class had groaned.

Aloha And Mai Tais

“Auwe, Mrs. Nakamura, you wan us be stuck-up haoles or somethin? Our parents say we need be free Kanakas Hawaii. Grow taro, fish aholé, gather limu. Surf big ones off Haleiwa, Waimea Bay. Why we be haole wannabees?”

“You would rather become workers for the plantations, students?” Mrs. Nakamura said in horror. “Rather than school teachers like Kimi and Felice? That’s what Vocation Tracks I and II lead you to, you know. Why, you would think that there were enough rural Kanakas and Portuguese in places like Waianae and Nanakuli to fill the empty jobs on the Plantations. And you know the Waianae Plantation is in danger of closing down. Why, I thought you students wanted to be city people. Or do you really want to become rural plantation labor?”

“No way wan work, Mrs. Nakamura. “We wan be Beach Boys, pupule surfers, like Duke. He show way for Kanaka Hawaii’s.”

“Duke!” Mrs. Nakamura said incredulously.

“Duke Kahanamoko. You know Duke. Win gold medals, swimming at Olympics. Now Sherriff of Waikiki.”

“Stop that, class! That’s just what I’m talking about. How many Duke Kahanamoko’s can there be? You live in a dream world. None of you have even one ounce of ambition. What Kimi and Felice have done is a truly wonderful accomplishment. Now they can become school teachers just like they’ve always said they wanted to be.”

Then it had struck me.

“But there’s no money for school fees, Mrs. Nakamura,” I’d blurted. “Tutu says I have to go work in the laundry like she does, or my brother Kimo will have to leave school. Our landlord has doubled our rent again.”

“You Kanakas!” My heart had frozen when Mrs. Nakamura looked at me with a look of such contempt. Her voice was filled with sarcasm.

“No wonder you Kanakas are always at the bottom of the heap. You mean, Kimi, that even when you get such a splendid opportunity as being accepted into the Territorial Normal School you have no motivation to persevere. Why can’t you be more my like the Japanese students on Oahu. Why, every one of them has passed the Standard English Exam. My Japanese students and their families see to it that they make something of their lives.”

“But Mrs. Nakamura,” I’d protested. “My family isn’t from the ali’i. We have no money from sale of lands or Government jobs. My father was killed in a storm fishing off of Nanakuli. My mother supports us by selling leis when the steamship comes in at the Aloha Tower. As hard as Tutu and mother work there’s no money left for Territorial Normal School fees.”

“Kimi Kai`ika, don’t be so apathetic. All you Hawaiians want is sympathy and handouts. What kind of job is lei making?”

I blanched. My mother's leis were famous amongst our people for their color, creativity and beauty. Kanakas Hawaii came from all over Oahu to buy her leis on special occasions, like luaus for weddings or births.

"Mrs. Nakamura has no understanding of what my ohana thinks is important," I realised.

"You think my family had money?" Mrs. Nakamura continued, her voice filled with sarcasm. But I knew I was not supposed to say anything. My Tutu's orders when I went to the city school came into my mind.

"No argue with teacher, Kimi. No look teacher in eyes, not polite. Keep family matters secret."

I lowered my gaze. I tried to follow Tutu's orders. But the class were all staring at me. The Japanese students were jeering at the Kanakas Hawaii and my friends were all set to defend me.

"Don worry, Kimi. We geev em the stink eye," my friend Keolo said.

"Hilahila (shame) flooded me. My face went beet red. I was the cause of the fight in the classroom. Then I felt myself getting huhu (angry) at the things Mrs. Nakamura was saying about Hawaiians.

"Why, Kimi," she continued. "My father was one of the plantation workers brought here to work the sugar-cane fields? And he put me and all my brothers and sisters through school. How do you think I became a teacher?"

Then it happened. I snapped. I lost my temper. I couldn't stop myself. I was so hurt and huhu at her attack on my Ohana. I violated Tutu's orders.

"But at least your father could find work, Mrs. Nakamura," I pointed out. "And you had a place to stay and could grow your own vegetables and raise chickens. All my family could do after my father's death was gather limu at the seashore. We had to move to the city. There was nothing for us in Nanakuli after my father's death. We couldn't even pay our rent."

"Nonsense, Kimi. Remember, I know your family. If your mother hadn't thrown money to the wind buying your brother Kimo ukeleles and surf-boards, and having you driven to hula classes in Waianae, funds would have been available for your courses today."

"Kimo has a special talent for music and surfing," Mrs. Nakamura," I'd protested. "And dancing hula Kahiko is sacred to the Gods. At least that's what my Kumu Hula, Aunt Auhea, says."

"Sacred? That unmelodious chanting? Why, I bet the Gods, if they are listening, are covering their ears." The Japanese members of the class laughed."

"Mrs. Nakamura. Our hula halau has won the hula Kahiko competition on Oahu for five years in a row. And Kimo won the keiki long board competition at Makaha last summer." I suddenly realised I was shouting.

Aloha And Mai Tais

Tears came into my eyes at Mrs. Nakamura's words about the hula. I realised she would never understand. I bolted out the door. I managed to make it out of the school grounds before I broke down into complete sobs. Tutu understood when I had told her about passing the exam, and needing money for the fees, just like she understands everything. I didn't dare tell her about what Mrs. Nakamura had said about our ohana.

"No worry, Kimi," she said, cuddling me close. "Tutu know what mean fo you become teacher. My Tutu, she make (dead), but always say wan you really need somethin dere be way. I go talk Mano." I realised Tutu was talking about our family ancestor `aumakua, the shark God, Mano.

"I go for limu tomorrow, Kimi. Maybe Mano find way fo you going dat school."

"And now this newspaper advertisement," I thought. "Right after Tutu talked to Mano in the old way. Why, the Tropical Palace Hotel is located on the bus line to the Territorial Normal School. I could go directly from the school to the Hotel for the afternoon and evening shows."

"Tutu," I yelled. "Tutu, I've found a way to get the money for Kimo's school fees and for Territorial Normal School. I showed her the newspaper ad."

"Your Mother no like, Kimi. She train you in Kahiko. Tink our family have sacred duty carry on old ways. I no tink so. It my husband, your tutu kane who chant fo King Kalakaua court. Husband say must preserve old ways. He devote life but I tink maybe waste. But your mother, she believe, pay have you learn hula Kahiko."

"Then wouldn't mother be happy to see the hula Kahiko danced before the tourists?" I argued. "Why would she object, Tutu, if it meant I could go to Normal School."

"You no understand, Kimi. Hula Kahiko sacred. Haoles no understand Kanakas Hawaii ways. Ohanas no tell haoles chants from past. My husband, your mother and your father hate haole ways. That why dey go live, Nanakuli. Wait fo homestead, Prince Kuhio promise. Live away Haole world. Tutu not want country. Like City. Stay Honolulu. But your parents take old path. Until Father killed. Mother not able afford rent, Nanakuli. Homestead not come yet. She force live with Tutu in City. But hope someday go back where only Kanakas Hawaii live. Prince Kuhio say befo death Kanakas Hawaii get homesteads but still dey wait. Government promise but say other tings mo important. Mother say maybe go Waipio Valley on Big Island."

"Tutu, I don't want to go to some desolate valley where no one lives. I want to be a teacher in Honolulu."

"Tutu know, Kimi. You no like Tutu dan mother or Tutu kane (Grandfather). But you study hula Kahiko, sacred hula, Kimi, suppose connect Kanaka Hawaii gods. Mother be sad if dance fo haole tourists. Give way secrets. Haoles no

understand hula Kahiko. They no like. No Aloha inside, like us.”

“But if it way get you teacher school?” Tutu seemed to go into deep thought.

“Maybe no tell Mother bout ad, Kimi. Tutu say you go Honolulu fo groceries. See what happen.”

“Thanks Tutu,” I sobbed. “You always understand everything.” My head ached. I didn’t think I would ever understood why my mother kept us from many of the normal activities kids did in Honolulu. She forbid us to have haole friends and both my brother Kimo and myself were forced to spend almost all our free time doing things my mother said were important to the people of old.

“That’s one of the reasons I wanted to become a teacher,” I realised. At least I would be allowed to stay in the City. I was terrified that if I didn’t go to Territorial Normal School I would have to go to Waipio Valley to grow taro like mother was always threatening.

“How does Mother know haoles didn’t like hula Kahiko,” I asked myself. “Maybe Felice and I could dance it at the Hotel and surprise Mother with it being applauded. How would we know if we didn’t try?” I rationalised.

Chapter 4.

Vitori And Ito.

“Ito, Brah, maybe dis answer to beeg problem,” I poked my rather plump Japanese friend and handed him the ad from the Honolulu newspaper.

“Look dey say need Polynesian talent. Where mo Polynesian talent than us?” My friend put down his prize possession, his ukelele, and read the ad with intense concentration.

“You right, Vitori-san.” Ito jumped out of his usual lethargic, ukelele-playing self and started to throw clothes frantically into a suitcase.

“Pack, Vitori-san,” he ordered. “We’ve got to go to Lihue right away. The steamer comes into Nawiliwili harbor, tomorrow. We’ve just about got enough time to make it if we leave immediately.”

“But Plantation fire if go Ito. You know. Luna never geev time off in middle week.”

“No choice, Vitori-san. Might be chance of a lifetime. How often does a hotel change management in Waikiki. Why, maybe they are getting rid of their old entertainers. We’re just what they are looking for. They do say “Polynesian talent,” don’t they?” Ito grabbed the paper again.”

“But Ito-san?” I stood up in front of him, blocking his way with my six-foot, four, bulk. Muscles bulged everywhere thanks to lifting sugar-cane twelve hours a day for months.

Aloha And Mai Tais

“Where we leev?” I worried. “Plantation fire if go Honolulu middle week. No where leev if hotel no want us.”

“We can stay with my family, Vitori-san. Father-san will be glad Ito-san is coming back to Honolulu. I’ll tell him I’ll enroll in the University of Hawaii business program like he wants me to. He’ll even let you stay with us if he thinks I’ve changed my mind and given up on becoming a ukelele player. You have no idea how upset father-san was when I told him that I didn’t want to go into his business.”

“Dat how you wound up Makee Plantation, Ito-san?” I laughed. Ito had never fit well with the horde of workers expected to enthusiastically get the sugar-cane onto the trains hauling it to the Kolola Sugar mill. He spent every minute he could borrow or steal trying to master the ukelele and the other instruments he had brought with him to Kauai.

“Father-san kick Ito out of house, Vitori, when I told him I was going to become a ukelele player. But he will let us come back if he thinks I’ve relented.

“You lie Father, Ito?”

“No, Vitori-san. I really will enroll for the business degree if the Hotel hires us. I imagine I can fit the classes around the entertainment times, anyway. Believe me, Ito-san had had enough of plantation labor.”

“You go University, Ito?” I asked him in amazement. I’d never even seen him read anything but sheet music.

“Dey let you in University?” Ito laughed at my incredulity.

“Vitori-san,” he protested. “Ito Nimura one smart Samarai. Just like the rest of my family. I’ve got straight “A” marks from my High School. But I would rather play the ukelele than become a businessman like my father. I love show business. Just like you do.”

“Vitori understand, Ito,” I told him. I knew instantly what he was saying. Any spare moment I got I practiced the sword-swallowing and fire-dancing that I had learned from the Polynesian dance troupe at the Coco Sands Hotel. The fire-dance had become an obsession with me ever since I first saw it performed for tourists on Kauai. But the Coco Sands wouldn’t hire me. It already had a troupe of Polynesian dancers. Maybe Ito was right and we shouldn’t care about being fired.

“Anyting better dan load sugar-cane fo dollar day, Ito.” I told him.

“But what bout paycheck. Luna no geev til Friday. Vitori no money fo steamer. And Tink Vitori owe mo dan make dis week at company store.”

“Don’t worry, Vitori-san. Ito will get you to Honolulu. He pulled out a roll of bills from his pocket.

“Where you get money, Ito-san?”

“From mother-san, Vitori. Mother-san, Okinawan, not Japanese. Father-san

was disowned by his own family when he married mother-san. It's considered a disgrace for a Samarai to marry an Okinawan. But mother-san understands you have to be true to what's in your heart. Her family was not happy that she married a Japanese man. She understands why I don't want to follow in father-san's footsteps. She understands I want to be a ukelele player in my heart. Mother-san secretly sends me money."

"Why Japanese, Okinawans not get along, Ito-san?"

"I don't know Vitori-san. Something to do with history, I guess. But let's get out of here, right now. Before anyone realises what we're doing. Maybe we can get a ride to Nawiliwili Harbor in that delivery truck that's about to leave from the company store." Ito looked out our poor excuse for a window, a plastic sheet you could barely peer through.

"The truck's still there. Let's go."

"What I do wit clothes, Ito? And fire dance stuff? I stared at my collection of sword swallowing and fire dancing equipment in despair. There was no way I could carry it all in my hands."

"Use this Vitori-san." Ito threw a huge duffle bag at me. I frantically grabbed my few belongings and threw them into it. Ito packed his musical instruments and clothes into several more of the large bags. I picked up two of his and mine. We reached the delivery van just as it was going to drive away.

"You go Nawiliwili Harbor?" I asked it's driver.

"Dey know you goin?" the large Filipino fellow queried, pointing towards the luna's shack.

"Sure, Brah," Ito answered him, handing him a bill from his pocket. The driver grinned.

"You go Lihue?" I asked again, throwing Ito's large duffle bags into the back of the truck.

"Sure Brah. Filipe ask no questions fo sure." Ito handed him another bill. We made it outside the plantation gates just as the horn sounded for the evening shift.

"Maybee beeg break fo us Ito-san?" I turned to my smart friend, as we disappeared down the rode, hope growing in my heart.

"You bet it is, Vitori-san!"

* * *

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