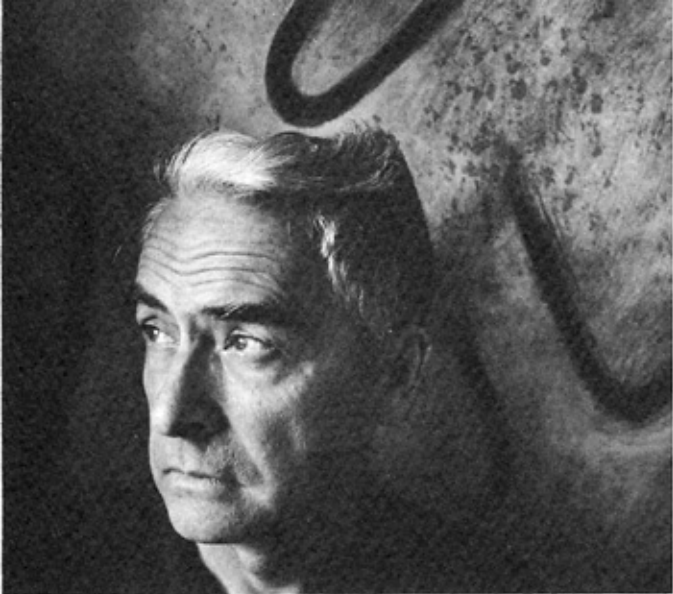


# Three Plays of Ancient Hawaii

J-C. Cojny  
with corrections



Jean Charlot



Jean Charlot works in many media. He is best known for his monumental murals, painted in the nowadays rare technique of true fresco. These are scattered the world over, from New Jersey to Fiji. His paintings and prints are permanently housed in private and public collections, from the Metropolitan Museum in New York to the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. Well known as an illustrator, he has also published books on archeology, art history, and art criticism.

One constant unifies Charlot's varied output, his interest in so-called primitive cultures, perhaps inherited from Aztec ancestors. Most of his paintings are on Mayan, Mexican, Hawaiian, or Fijian themes. A movie was based on his study of Hawaiian petroglyphs.

Even though a new departure, the present volume fits well within this constant pattern. It is a product of his dogged efforts to master the Hawaiian language, which span the fifteen years of his stay in the Islands. In

these three plays it is hard to discover where translation ends and creation begins. Purists shy away from the freedom with which he dares to handle ancient sources. Charlot answers that only thus could he keep intact the flow of the ancient epics, and carry into English their unique climate, of a drama spiced with a sense of humor.

Jean Charlot teaches History of Art at the University of Hawaii.

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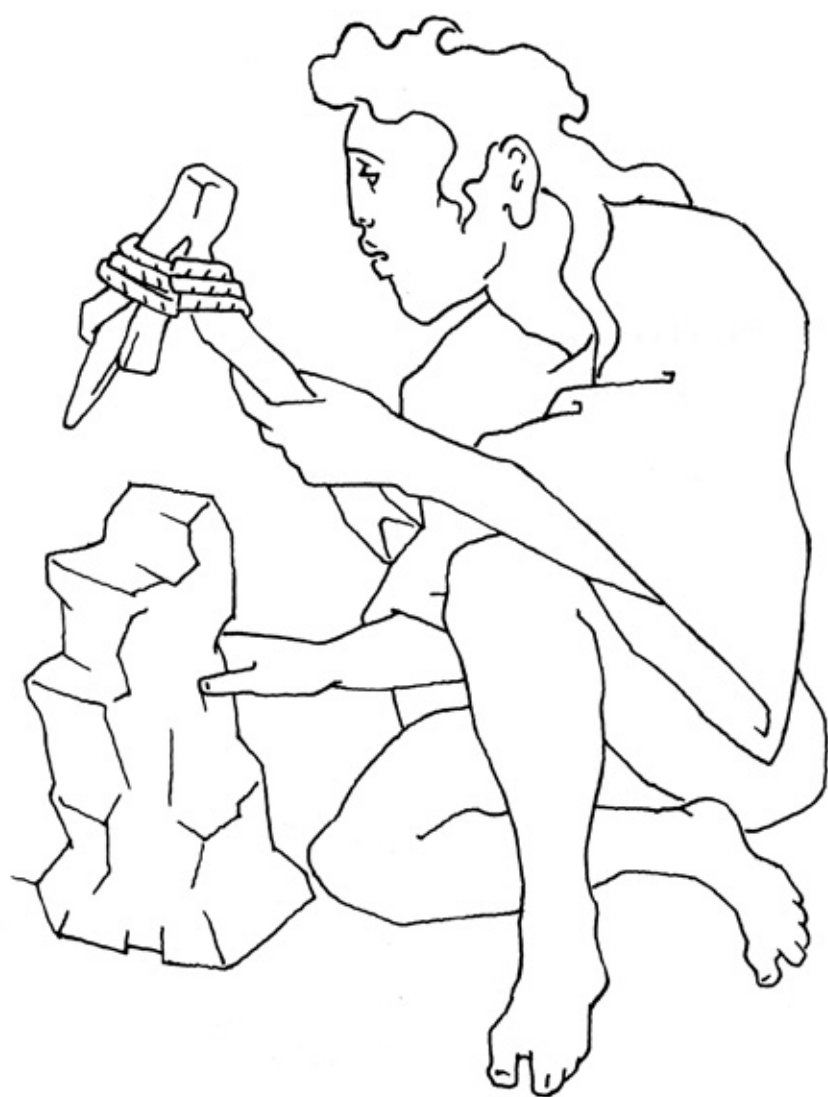
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my copy.  
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**Three Plays of  
Ancient Hawaii**





# Three Plays of Ancient Hawaii

Jean Charlot



University of Hawaii Press  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
1963

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Jean Charlot Collection  
University of Hawaii

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## Preface

*In 1949 Charlot assumed the Hawaiian name Palani (French) and began the study of Hawaiian, surprising his fellow students and his teachers with his French accent, his assiduousness (no other student has enrolled seven times in fourth-year Hawaiian), and his translations that were often beautiful and sometimes hilarious. At the same time he was raising a family, teaching university classes, painting frescoes, painting pictures, illustrating books, designing books, writing art criticisms, building a house, and play-acting. (In the Honolulu Community Theater production of *My Three Angels* in 1953 he starred as a French murderer on Devil's Island.)*

*From 1959 to 1960 he wrote the plays U'i a U'i (Beauty Meets Beauty), Moa a Mo'i (Chicken into King), and Na'auao (The Light Within) while on sabbatical leave in New York. Ignoring the noise, dirt, and snow of that city, he moved spiritually into Stone-Age, feudal Hawaii and wrote the plays largely from memory, telling his Hawaiian teacher that he was doing his homework faithfully.*

*In the plays he ingeniously welded together motifs from many stories, most of which may be found in Selections from the Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folk-Lore,<sup>1</sup> a facsimile edition of the original Fornander, with Hawaiian and English on opposite pages. The English translations were presumably made by or under the supervision of Thomas G. Thrum, and often do not convey the imagery and subtlety of the original Hawaiian. This is especially true of the chants, which are in many instances translated*

too literally to convey any meaning. Charlot's translations are much closer to the spirit of the original Hawaiian. Many of the motifs listed below that Charlot has taken are from the legend of Kawelo, but some are from other stories. Numbers are of pages in the *Fornander Selections*.

Boys fly kites; the boy Kawelo defeats his cousin--an augury of the future (35).

Boys steal chickens (197).

Hero wins girl by giving a toy to the girl's favorite little brother (259-265).

Taunts before battle (181-183).

Father-in-law's taunts (57-59).

An undercut blow of the war club (195).

Skimpy temple offerings (47).

Spies (183-185).

Facing a foe on a mountain pass (99, 167).

An image fools the foe.<sup>2</sup>

Foe eats, then dons a calabash helmet which blinds him (195).

Defeated foe banished to the uplands (239).

Or Charlot has taken bits and fragments and woven them into the thread of his drama. In the play *U'i a U'i* the hero's scorn for the girl's single pimple is drawn from the Hawaiian accolade for the perfect beauty as one without a pimple, bump, or blemish of any kind ('a'ohe pu'u, 'a'ohe ke'e, kina 'ole). The old grandmother's disapproval of kite flying in the opening scene of *Na'auao* was inspired by a tape recording by an old lady from Maui who told how when she flew a kite her grandparents scolded and predicted famine. *Kauahoa's* helpless fascination by an image in the same play was based on the story of a little boy who was lost for three days, and then found sequestered with an image that he loved (page 265).

Kawelo's final pledge in *Na'auao* to the people is an adaptation of Queen Kamamalu's farewell chant when she left for England.<sup>3</sup>

If the sequence of events in the plays seems at times disjointed, as some have claimed, one may say that so is the action in the legends and songs.

Some motifs and specific events were invented by Charlot, and this may displease those who feel that it is improper for an artist to take his themes from folklore. Such inven-



tions include Kawelo's lowly birth and his artistry, the manner of Hakau's murder (Moa a Mo'i), a child born to Hi'iaka and Kamapua'a (U'i), and the conflict in Moa of the traditionalist and the rebel.

A right-versus-left conflict is not found overtly in the stories. It may be that the un-Hawaiian committees of the sixteenth century considered publicity for the extreme left (or moderate left) as subversive. Would kahunas have countenanced stories of triumphant atheists? (Yet there are words in Hawaiian for scepticism and the irreligious, as 'aia, ho'omaloka, ho'omalau, ho'opihala, mana'o'i'o'ole, and the Hawaiian writer Kepelino<sup>4</sup> speaks of godless persons as po'e akua 'ole. Were there no scoffers in Umi's day?) In the early nineteenth century the dissenters became so powerful that they induced Kamehameha II to overthrow the taboos. Was this rise to power of the unbelievers a sudden thing, or was there not a centuries-old resentment of taboos, some of which were oppressive? At any rate, this theme of belief versus disbelief is never shown in *Lei Day* pageants and is one of Charlot's discoveries.

Another discovery is the effective use of chant in English translations that for once are meaningful, polished, and cadenced.

Another innovation that bothered a few and delighted many is the juxtaposition of modern slang and courtly ritual (a high chiefess calls for "snacks").

Is this a Frenchman's unwillingness to be solemn about solemn things? Or is it in keeping with the *mélange* in the legends of sense and non-sense, of bravery and cowardice, of homage and cheek. In the Fornander story, Kawelo displays great skill in fighting and spear dodging, but attempts to commit suicide when in his wife's presence he is called a slave. He addresses his favorite younger brother in chants of polished poetry, and likens him to an adze, a cockspur, a coral reef that breaks canoes, and a warrior who scatters his foes like peeping chicks; war for him is as relaxing as a bath. In the face of this praise, the younger brother scolds Kawelo: "All you think about is loving women. You stay behind, and I'll go to war!" And on another occasion he says the equivalent of "Shut up!" (Kulikuli!)

*Na'auao* was played by the Honolulu Community Theater from April 27 to May 6, 1962. According to the review in one of the local newspapers, the production was the most important stage event in Hawaii in many years, and, according to an editorial in the same journal, the Community Theater in this venture had come of age.

The production had certain local advantages: sets by Charlot, chants by Ka'upena Wong, nose-flute melodies by Enoch Kaina, Polynesians for casting, and Hawaiians in the audience, for whom motifs and jokes had special and even tender meaning.

The leading role in the play, that of Kawelo, a peace-loving, artistic, and dreamy youth, was brilliantly played by Enoch Kaina, who is so much like Charlot's conception of Kawelo as a small person who carries an adze and glitters with an inner light that one wonders, was Kaina acting?

The theme of the play seems to be: which shall triumph, the war club or the adze, war or peace, might or spirit?

Kawelo is not impressive physically, and his foes are Mr. Polynesians; nevertheless he dominates and subdues them through spiritual power, known widely in the Pacific as *mana*, or because, if we will, of the light within, an imaginative translation by Zohmah Charlot of *na'auao* (literally, *inwards full of light*): in a sense the play is a tribute to the spiritual values of the ancient Hawaiians--but witty, brittle, not sentimental or cliché-ridden.

Any clichés in the play are clichés in Hawaiian, but they are fresh and original in English. Some of these follow: where kites fly, the land starves; oh days of youth; soldiers by forties, by four hundreds; my war club kills at one blow; war is relaxing as a bath.

These phrases are so well known to Hawaiians that an eager listener in the opening-night audience, Jennie Wilson, aged ninety and versed in the lore of her people, said that she could repeat the Hawaiian to herself as she heard the English.

*Na'auao* on the Community Theater stage followed immediately after *The Tempest*. This was not the reason so many people independently had the effrontery to compare Charlot to Shakespeare. What were the reasons? A few come to mind. In both the scenery is sparse and there are numerous short scenes. Both use soliloquies. In both there



are many characters and subplots. In both clowning and excitement are juxtaposed. The object of each is entertainment (or art) rather than history or folklore for their own sakes, and each accordingly sifts from the many events and characterizations of the protagonists in the source material, whether actual history or folklore. Finally Shakespeare and Charlot use blank verse, and Charlot, too, has flashes of greatness.

Who will enjoy the plays?

People who like to laugh will get to laugh, but perhaps politicians and tour directors will not laugh--they are satirized.

Those looking for Hawaiian subjects for pageants and plays may for years to come find scenes and themes.

Aestheticians interested in the creative process may find that the descriptions of the sets permit the privileged reader to see how an artist builds a painting before taking brush in hand.

And this is what one member of the cast of Na'auao said at the end of the season: "Lately I've been very proud of being Hawaiian."

Samuel H. Elbert

1. Samuel H. Elbert, ed., *Selections from Fornander's Hawaiian Antiquities and Folk-Lore* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1959).

2. Abraham Fornander, *Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folk-Lore: The Hawaiians' Account of the Formation of Their Islands and Origin of Their Race, with the Traditions of Their Migrations, etc., as Gathered from Original Sources by Abraham Fornander* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1918-1919).

3. Helen Pratt, ed., *Ancient Hawaiian Civilization: A Series of Lectures Delivered at the Kamehameha Schools* (Honolulu: The Kamehameha Press, 1933).

4. Martha Warren Beckwith, ed., *Kepelino's Traditions of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1932).

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# **I Na'auao**

*The Light Within*

NA'AUAO was first produced in Honolulu on April 27, 1962, at the Fort Ruger Theatre. The play was presented by the Honolulu Community Theatre, Don Tescher directing, with the following cast:

KAWELO ..... David Ramler  
 KAUAHOA ..... Dana Clevenger  
 GRANDMOTHER ..... Mrs. C. K. Huang (Soo Yong)  
 RECRUITING OFFICER ..... Tupou Taunaolo (Manu)  
 KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA ..... Mary Ann Noland  
 GIRLS ..... Winsome Ululaniikealohaakeakua Wong  
                     Frances Kalaniwai Kaopuiki, Priscilla Kaelemakule  
   Odetta Kaanehe  
 KAMALAMA ..... David Harrington  
 KAWELO as a man ..... Enoch Kaina  
 KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU ..... Richard C. Drake  
 KAUAHOA as a man ..... George Kahoilua  
 KAKUHIHEWA ..... Tom Kealiinohomoku  
 THUG ..... Martin Charlot  
 THIEF ..... George Dicker  
 POLITICIAN ..... Alvin Fuse  
 PRIEST 1 ..... Fred Kalani Meinecke  
 PRIEST 2 ..... John P. Young  
 HAKALOA ..... Tupou Taunaolo  
 WALAHE'EIKIO ..... Simau Fonoimoana  
 CHAMPIONS AND SOLDIERS ..... Simau Fonoimoana  
                                     Alvin Fuse, Ronald Larsen, Leibert Allen  
                                     Roger Roberts, Tupou Taunaolo  
 SERVANTS ..... Claire Awong, Norman Kanishura  
                                     Alvin Koo, Harold Yoshimura  
 MESSENGER ..... Gary Kau

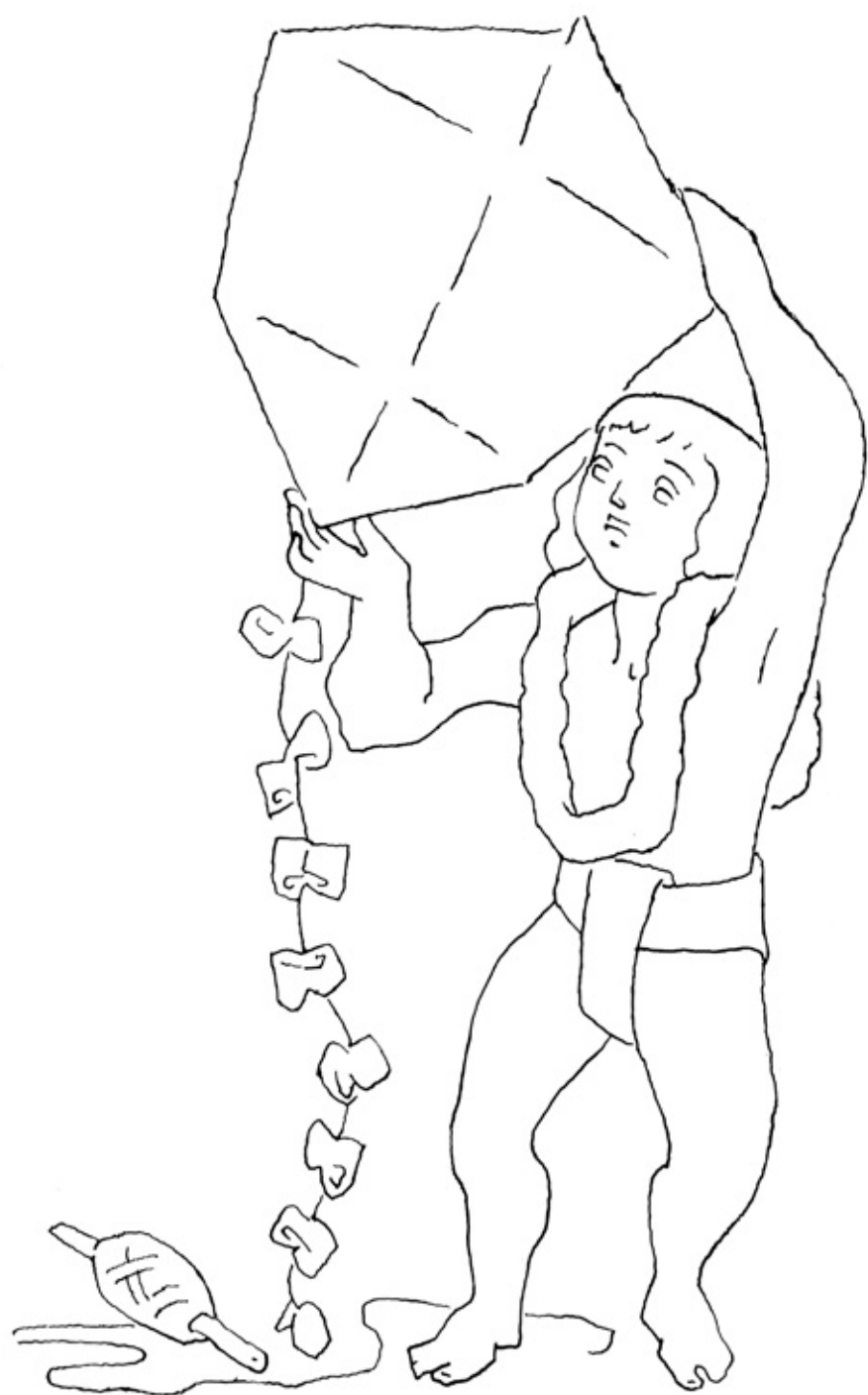
#### SCENES

ACT I. Scene 1: *A field in Kailua, Oahu*  
           Scene 2: *A beach*  
           Scene 3: *The hut of Kalonaiקה'ila'au*  
           Scene 4: *A training area near the court of*  
                     *Kakuhihewa, King of Oahu*

ACT II. Scene 1: *The hut of Kalonaiקה'ila'au*  
           Scene 2: *A cave*  
           Scene 3: *A cliff overlooking the battle plain*  
           Scene 4: *King Kakuhihewa's temple court*







## ACT ONE

*SCENE 1: A flat expanse of land, Kailua, Oahu. Its very low horizon is a mere margin to the area of unbroken blue sky. Two boys of the same age, one big, one small, are flying kites. On stage one sees only the kites' strings, two diagonals stretched in motion against the blue of the sky. The strings are wound on spools held by the children with both hands. The smaller boy, KAWELO, flies his kite high, giving out string as needed. The kite of the taller boy, KAUAHOA, flies very low. When the cord slackens, Kauahoa reels it in.*

*To one side, seated on a low stone, their GRANDMOTHER leans on a stick. Scattered on the ground close by are blocks of wood, some half-carved into the shapes of chickens, containers, or gods. An adze lies nearby. Woodchips are strewn about.*

GRANDMOTHER

*(To herself)* The boys like it. I don't. Kites in flight cast their shadows over the land like birds of prey, like high chiefs eager to survey what as yet is not theirs. As goes the poor man's saying, "Where kites fly, the land starves."

KAUAHOA

*(Bumping against Kawelo)* Scat, puny one. Even the winds are mean to me. Your kite rises into the sun, godlike. Mine hops over the tips of the grass blades like a wounded plover. Little cousin, how I hate you!

## KAWELO

Save your hate for the winds, big cousin. Yours was a fool-hardy wager: My planting stick against your surfboard. Lose, and it shall be mine.

*(The string of Kawelo's kite rises to a near vertical. The string of Kauahoa's kite jerks suddenly, goes slack, lies on the ground. Kawelo laughs. Kauahoa drops his now useless spool, faces Kawelo and lunges, both fists at the ready. Kawelo, without letting go of the spool, runs in a circle around Kauahoa, lightly pinning his arms with the cord of the flying kite. Kauahoa clumsily frees himself. Again he faces Kawelo, but this time irresolutely.)*

## KAUAHOA

Some day I shall kill you, little cousin. On my oath!

*(Kawelo laughs. Grandmother rises and interposes herself between the two boys.)*

## GRANDMOTHER

Stop it! *(The boys separate and busy themselves reeling in their kites' cords. To herself)* Kauahoa has too much brawn and Kawelo has too much wit. That little one, his brainy skull is soft as tapa cloth. A single blow could snuff the chick.

*(Off stage, a single sustained conch-shell note. Enter a small platoon of soldiers headed by an OFFICER in short red tapa cape. He carries a tabu-stick: a pole topped by a wooden ball wrapped in red tapa. Officer plants tabu-stick in the ground as a soldier blows the conch once more. Grandmother and boys prostrate themselves.)*

## OFFICER

*(Twirling a sort of swagger stick with one hand)* Good manners, I calls it. For peasants tucked in such a forsaken neck of the woods, very good manners indeed. We met

some--more beasts than men--who could hardly tell a royal *kapu*-stick from a fishing spear. Rise. *(Another blast of the conch. In a declamatory style)* Desirous to secure the safety of his lands no less than that of his royal person, Lord Kakuhihewa, King of Oahu, is searching for boys of promise, young enough to be trained in all the manly arts, the sports of peace as well as the crafts of war. Thus groomed, the lucky one shall rank with the king's familiars. In peacetime, as bodyguard to the king, he will bask daily in the august presence. In wartime, as royal champion, he will match in single combat rival champions sent forth by enemy kings. Royal shelter, food galore, feather cloaks and glory, shall be the lucky boy's lot. Yes! Even if born a commoner, otherwise fated to wallow through a lifetime in the muck of taro fields, and the stench of fish scum. *(A conch-shell blast closes the peroration. Conversationally)* Any taker? *(Shyly, tentatively, Kawelo takes a step forward. Grandmother sketches a gesture of dismay. Good-natured laugh)* Puny chick. Wouldn't know how to kick his spur, or fluff a feather, or crow face to the sun. *(Gestures a dismissal. Squaring his shoulders, Kauahoa steps forward)* But there's a young rooster. *(Good-humoredly he jabs the boy in the ribs with his swagger stick)* Crow, chick! Crow, chick! *(Impulsively, Kauahoa snatches the stick and breaks it in two against his chest)* Truly a fighting cock. A born champion! This is it! *(A gesture from the officer. Two of his men close in alongside Kauahoa.)*

#### KAUAHOA

When I am trained and in the service of the king, what if I should slaughter a commoner?

#### OFFICER

You will be praised. Wars may be far between. It is a champion's privilege to keep in trim. What better training for war than killing?

*(Group makes ready to go. Before exit, Kauahoa turns around.)*

#### KAUAHOA

*(To grandmother)* Thank you, grandmother, for the meager

fare, for the meager care, thank you. *(To Kawelo)* And thanks, cousin Kawelo, for sharpening in me such an appetite for blood that it shall usher me the sooner into manhood. Look well at me, puny cousin. Our next meeting shall be your last. *(Kauahoa exits surrounded by the soldiers. Grandmother sadly seats herself on the stone.)*

#### GRANDMOTHER

Your cousin shall be better off at court. And at home there shall be no more chickens strangled and eaten unplucked and uncooked.

#### KAWELO

Granny, I remain. *(Goes to the wood pieces, squats, adze in hand, before one of his unfinished carvings and observes it with concentration. Kawelo gives a few tentative strokes of his adze as he talks, and continues to work all through his grandmother's soliloquy, only half attentive to what she says.)* Cousin left us seething mad, mad at me. Was it my fault he wagered his surfboard? Was it my fault his kite rubbed the winds the wrong way while mine wooed them?

#### GRANDMOTHER

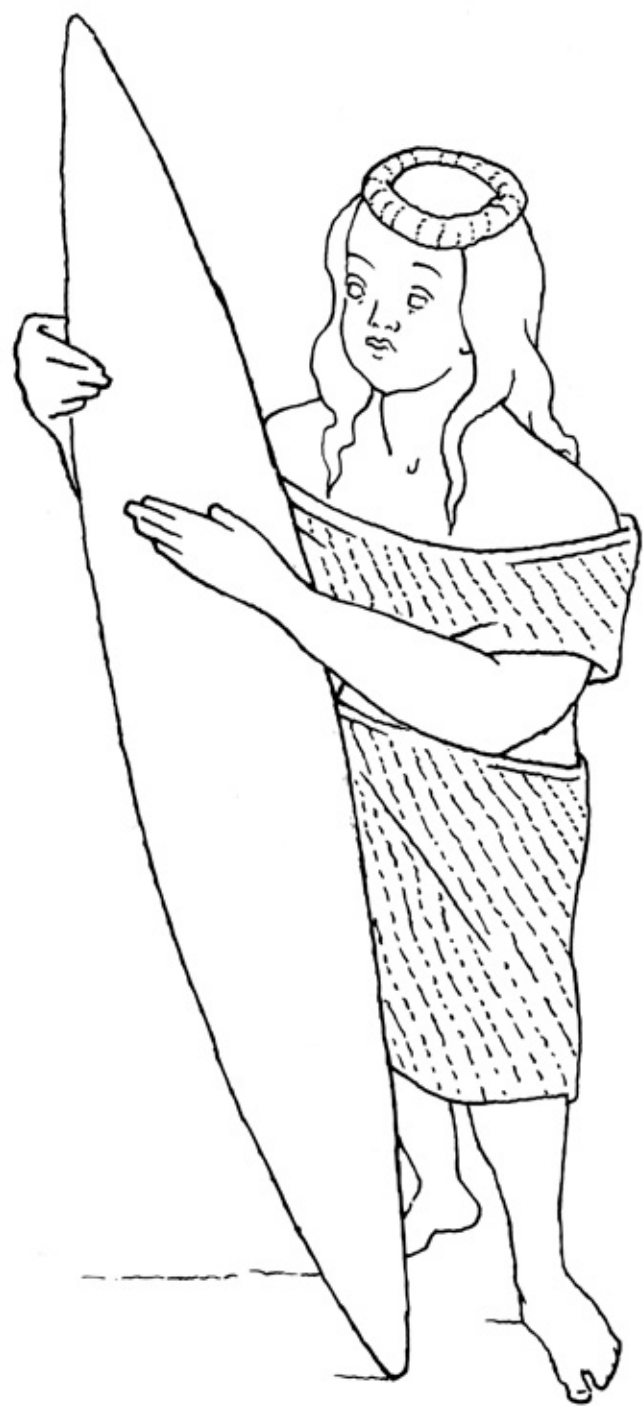
Both of you were born the same night--Kauahoa in the late dusk, and you in the early dawn. I acted as midwife to both your mother and his. And each asked me to prophesy, as is my skill, what future was in store for the bloody bawling lump of flesh I held up for her admiration. With fingers as deft as divining rods I probed the shape of your newborn skulls to detect what manner of man was hid in the infant. Your cousin's head yielded no more clues to human adventures than would the round bulb of a yam. But your skull in every one of its convolutions sprouted seeds of greatness. Heroic deeds, indeed kingly prerogatives, knocked impatiently at its brittle shell, wanting out. That night I was weary with overwork. I must have confused your fates. Today, Kauahoa, the yam, is on his way to court as a not uncertain premise of glory. While chiefly Kawelo is left behind to help his granny with household chores. Yes, King Kawelo will farm and fish, mash poi on the poi-board, get up every dawn to warm up the cooking oven. And in his spare time,

as is his wish and his skill, he shall adze sticks into toys or tools. Perhaps my aging fingers missed a clue that night.

KAWELO

*(Stops work. Meditatively)* For a moment he was afraid, Granny. When I pinned down his arms with the kite's cord he was angry and afraid. He seemed to me then more afraid than angry. Should we meet again as grown-up men, I may live; he may die.

*(Resumes work in earnest. Grandmother shakes her head and sighs.)*





## ACT ONE

*SCENE 2: A sandy beach with a clump of lauhala trees at one side.*

*Enter a bevy of young and pretty girls, wrapped in tapa towels, their hair loose and wet. They carry surfboards. They prop them among the hala roots and trunks, and lie down, or sit and squat, drying and combing each other's hair. Center of interest is the prettiest, KANEWAHINE-IKIAOHA. As she speaks, the girls underline what she tells them with giggles.*

*Paying no attention to the others, a boy of twelve, KAMALAMA, is seated in the sand, playing, filling with sand a small calabash.*

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

...and that fellow, what a splendid fellow. Skin as polished and dark as a kukui bead, muscles bulging all over him like hills and valleys. His surfing board was half the length of mine and narrower than a sledge. Woman that I am, I rode the second wave. He boldly waited for the third. I landed on my behind just in time to see that fellow standing his full height on his board, arms crossed over his chest, rising with the surf and aimed directly at me. His surfboard plowed its way ahead as swift as a dolphin, as if it had speed of its own tucked in its wooden entrails. The man's suntanned body was framed between two white tusks of foam. How he did it I know not, but he beached the board, and himself on

it, without a gesture, as if he was the statue of a god carved to command sea and surf.

GIRL 1

And then what?

GIRL 2

What happened?

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

He came off his board. He came at me. He talked to me.

GIRL 1

What then?

GIRL 2

What did he say?

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

He said his name was Kekoa.

GIRL 1

Then what?

GIRL 2

What did you say?

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

I said, "My name is Kanewahineikiaoha."

GIRL 1

What then?

GIRL 2

What did he say?

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

What could he say? It dawned on him who I was. And who my father is. He took to his heels like I was a zombie. I threw his surfboard after him!

*(All girls nod their heads understandingly.)*

KAMALAMA

*(Still at play, without raising his head, imperatively)* Come, sister! Here, sister! *(Kanewahineikiaoha runs to him, kneels at his side.)*

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

What is your wish, darling little brother, precious small darling, flower lei of my heart?

KAMALAMA

Give me your surfboard.

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

Dearest, you know this is my favorite, the one of *wiliwili* wood, the one papa gave me.

KAMALAMA

Give me your surfboard.

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

Very well, if you want it, little brother. You know I never refuse you anything.

*(She fetches the board and brings it to the boy. Without interrupting his game he puts his hand on it.)*

KAMALAMA

*(Firmly)* It's mine!

*(Kanewahineikiaoha rejoins the girls.)*

GIRL 1

How you love Kamalama!

GIRL 2

How you spoil him!

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

He is the only man father lets me see alive. How quickly my would-be lovers learn their lesson. A bashed skull here. Some broken ribs there. A few kneecaps smashed to a pulp. At first, it used to flatter me, this unflagging attention father gave me. Now, I am not so sure. Granted I am beautiful, granted that one of these days a stout-hearted fellow will mash father's aging pate--still, loneliness creeps in.

GIRL 1

That's what you get for being the daughter of the greatest warrior of them all. Is it true his war club is so heavy he alone can lift it? That it can cut a fellow in two equal parts, split clean from head to groin? That pushed headlong into a belly it parts a man from his tripe, and so swiftly that the fellow never realizes he is dead?

GIRL 2

You are desirable, Kanewahineikiaoha. Still, you should understand a would-be lover's point of view. Of what use would he be to you neatly split in two halves, or else gutless like a steamed chicken?

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

True. At times parents can be oppressive. Let's go eat. *(Girls pick up their surfboards and exit. Before leaving, Kanewahineikiaoha tenderly turns toward Kamalama)* Play a little longer, Kamalama. *(She carefully props up her surfboard, which is now Kamalama's, against the hala roots. Exits.)*

*(Enter Kawelo, now a man in his twenties. He is dressed in a dun-colored loincloth, with a travel-*

*er's short tapa cloak over his shoulders. In his belt is tucked an adze. Over one shoulder he carries a net-sack, half full. His hair is long and unruly. He casts an admiring look in the direction in which the girls have disappeared. He squats by Kamalama and swings his sack to the ground.)*

KAMALAMA

*(Looking at him unconcernedly)* Hello.

KAWELO

Hello. I am Kawelo. Who was that beautiful girl who just left?

KAMALAMA

*(Casually)* That's my sister. *(Jabbing his finger at Kawelo menacingly)* Her name is Kanewahineikiaoha.

KAWELO

*(Casually)* Pretty name. Maybe a little long.

KAMALAMA

*(More jabbings)* Our father is Kalonaikaha'ila'au.

KAWELO

A goodly name, not short either.

KAMALAMA

You are afraid?

KAWELO

Why? I enjoy looking at beautiful women, and right now I think I am falling in love with your sister.

KAMALAMA

I see. You are a stranger in these parts. *(Goes back to his game. Kawelo notices the surfboard. Goes to it. Passes his hand over it lovingly.)*

KAWELO

Beautiful wood. Beautiful grain. So smooth, too.

KAMALAMA

It's mine.

KAWELO

If it was mine, how I would love to work it over. *(Takes adze from his belt and gestures with it over the surface of the board. His gesture describes two enormous oval eyes. A horizontal stroke blocks in place the nostrils, and under them a gaping mouth with downward corners)* What a god is imprisoned inside this surfboard. I guess, though, that for you surfing is momentous, more so than freeing this godly being from its wooden prison.

KAMALAMA

Surfing is momentous.

KAWELO

*(Half to himself, but Kamalama is paying attention now)* As I grew up, grandmother hoped that it would taper off, this urge to free out of logs what is there imprisoned. Beings that will remain unfulfilled unless a knowing adze breaks forcefully open the womb of dead matter that stands between them and the world. Granny said I was ingenious at making toys. Here I stand, a grown man, and all I know to do is no more than I knew then. To me, it seems a good task, somehow, and a useful one. Children love to handle toys. And grownups need gaze upon the face of their gods.

KAMALAMA

What toys? *(Kawelo opens the sack and brings out a wooden chicken, shaped very much like a decoy duck. He holds it upon the palm of his hand for Kamalama to see. The boy claps his hands in delight. There is awe in his voice)* A chicken! *(Very cautiously he raises both hands to it, then quickly snatches it away from Kawelo, who makes no motion to retrieve it. Kamalama hugs the chicken to his heart and rubs noses with it passionately. Shyly, pleadingly)* Please, give it to me.

KAWELO

It is yours. *(A pause)* You said that girl was your sister?

KAMALAMA

*(Sadness replaces ecstasy. Reluctantly he hands the chicken back toward Kawelo)* Take it back.

KAWELO

I was just going to ask if I could meet her. That's all I was going to ask you.

KAMALAMA

*(Hesitates, chicken still in hand)* I know that. And if I ask her to talk with you, she will. And if I ask her to rub noses with you, she will. Because there is nothing, nothing at all, that sister would not do for me.

KAWELO

Well then ...

KAMALAMA

Well then, I like this chicken more than any toy I ever owned. Because you made this beautiful chicken I like you too. And if I keep it I couldn't refuse what you ask for--and I don't want you to die.

KAWELO

*(Puzzled)* It doesn't follow.

KAMALAMA

*(Impatiently)* You are a stranger, all right. *(Hugs chicken)* Can I keep it and you won't ever ask me for anything?

KAWELO

Keep it.

KAMALAMA

Thank you.



*(Kamalama plays with his new toy. Kawelo goes to one side, his back turned. He squats, takes a piece of wood out of his sack, starts adzing it tentatively. Enter Kanewahineikiaoha. She is dressed decorously, with a patterned tapa pa'u and shawl and a feather head-lei.)*

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

It is time, my love, my lei, my godling.

*(Notices Kawelo, who, turning his back on both, is now engrossed in his work. She stops.)*

KAMALAMA

Go to him, sister. He wants you.

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

Pet, I truly love you, but there is a limit. Who is he?

KAMALAMA

He gave me this chicken he carved, this lovely chick. *(Hands it to Kanewahineikiaoha)* He says toys are inside all the tree trunks. And he says that with his adze he can open a door and let them out.

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

*(Fondles chicken)* This is nice work. But surely the man does not want to talk with me. His build is not even that of a soldier, surely not that of a champion.

KAMALAMA

He says, too, he wants very much to talk with you. He is a stranger, a know-nothing.

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

You want me to, little one?

KAMALAMA

*(A shrug)* Why not? Let's see what happens. *(Gets his chicken back)* I'll be around the corner. *(Exits.)*

*(Kanewahineikiaoha goes to Kawelo. Looks at his back. Shrugs.)*

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

*(Softly)* Hello.

KAWELO

*(Without looking up or stopping work)* Hello.

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

*(Looks at what he is doing)* What are you doing?

KAWELO

*(Looks at her)* Oh! It's you. *(Stops adzing but does not rise; he is still preoccupied)* What am I doing? Oh! I don't know yet. It is like this: the bird catchers, the feather hunters in the uplands, they lay their delicately poised traps as best they know. But they are not at all sure what it is they'll catch until it is caught. Until one holds, in the palm of one's hand, the frightened live creature, how could one know if its feathers should be yellow, red, or black? What hides in this piece of wood someday I shall know, because we shall all see it. Maybe a bat. Maybe a mask. Maybe just another planting stick. *(Drops his adze. Rises. Looks at Kanewahineikiaoha admiringly)* How beautiful you are. *(Passes his hand over her forehead along the roots of the hair. She does not move)* Your live skull, it is as lovely as a dead one. *(Circles her neck with both hands without touching it. She does not move)* Your neck, it is like whale ivory, so polished and perfectly round. That reminds me. I have something in my sack that may fit it. *(Extracts from sack a hook shaped like a lei palaoa, hanging from a sennet braid. He holds it to her breast, then ties it at the back of her neck. Takes a few steps back. Looks at her. Still she has not moved)* I thought so. It looks nice on you. Keep it. Oh, it's not the real thing, you know. I am of peasant stock.

No precious heirlooms in our family. I carved it out of wood. Just a stick and a string to hang it from. That's all. *(She passes her fingers lightly over the necklace and her breast.)*

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

I am sure it looks nice on me. Thank you. Better go now.

KAWELO

Why? I like you. Maybe I love you. Who knows?

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

I like you too. That's why. Whatever men I see are all men of war, men of strife, men who have tasted human blood. At that, I see them only fleetingly, and when they depart these men of blood are bloody men.

KAWELO

Your little brother mentioned something like that: that to court you is to court death . . .

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

They do not all die, but there are some who could wish they were dead. Will you go now?

KAWELO

I think not. There is something in you that needs out, not unlike these beings tucked inside trees, waiting. Here an adze would be useless though, and I am at sea without an adze. *(Tucks adze back into his belt. Puts in the sack the piece of wood he was working on. Swings sack over his shoulder)* Live with me.

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

First, you'll have to ask my father. He is a jealous father.

KAWELO

And if he agrees, you'll come and live with me?

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

I promise.

*(They hold hands and exit. Kamalama comes out from behind the hala bush, picks up his calabash, puts his surfboard on his head, and follows them with a prancing gait.)*



## ACT ONE

*SCENE 3: The interior of an unusually large grass hut, the size of a longhouse. In the dim light one sees racks for spears and racks for kahilis. A set of war clubs of assorted sizes prominently displayed. Against the back wall of unusual shape, basketry bundles, tightly roped, reminiscent of Egyptian mummies.*

*Foreground center, a very large man, strongly built, is kneeling on a mat. His beard and hair, carefully groomed, are of dark auburn lavishly streaked with gray. He is wearing a black loincloth and an ample black tapa cloak; on his breast, a very large whale-tooth necklace, its mounting of human hair of a fiery red. He is busy stringing together with a large bone needle a lei made of rings of dark wood alternating with rings of bone. Shaving his mat and comfortably propped up on black tapa cushions, a giant war club, of seasoned and darkened wood, shaped like the club of Hercules.*

*The man is KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU, the father of Kamewahineikiaoha.*

*His chiefly status is evidenced by his retinue. Behind him a kahili-bearer and a kapu-stick bearer. The kapu-stick ball is wrapped in black cloth. The kahili is of the fluffy type, of dark-green cock feathers. Its stem is ringed with*

*a black-and-white pattern. At the side of the war club, a fanbearer. The fan has a long black-and-white stem and is made of fine matting, crescent-shaped in true Hawaiian style. It will be kept in lazy motion until the bearer exits. At the side of the chief a spittoon-bearer. The spittoon is of black wood, with round incrustations of bone.*

*Set in front of Kalonaikaha'ila'au is an empty tray propped up on two crouching slaves carved out of dark wood.*

*Without interrupting his needlework, Kalonaikaha'ila'au clears his throat with a formidable explosion of growls. Spittoon-bearer hastily springs into action and retrieves his master's spittle, as hearty as his growl.*

#### KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

*(To nobody in particular, but with a deep stentorian voice)* Shadows lengthen. Daughter should be back by now. I wish these fellows' bones could be larger. My eyesight is getting dim. My needle can hardly find the marrow holes. That Mo'omo'oikio I am working at, he was a large man, larger even than I am. Still his femurs are small, like women's bones. *(More stringing)* I hope that fool girl comes home alone this once. I have other work to do. I know she wouldn't mind it much if her papa suffered a stroke. That's gratitude for you! *(Stops working. Rubs his eyes. Signals. Servants remove his work. He now turns toward his war club and talks to it)* Faithful war club, well you deserve the name I bestowed on you, Wahie'eka'eka. Together we grew up. We shall wane together. *(Grasps at his own biceps)* Already I wobble. *(Pats club)* And you, the bugs are after you. *(Another growl, another spittle)* You and I, what times we had together. *(Passes his hand over his lei palaoa)* Remember that fellow. He was a giant. Never combed his hair or beard in his lifetime. Used to live in a cave, and he emerged only when hungry. A hungrier ogre never lived. He fancied marrow. When you and I entered his cave at last, there wasn't a single bone he hadn't cracked and chewed on! *(Nudges club with his elbow where its ribs would be)* Between you and me, I picked a fight with him mostly for the color of his hair. Well, and maybe the size of his bones.



*(Raises lei and looks down at it)* The hair is truly handsome, unique anyhow. But his bones were a disappointment. *(Shrugs. Spits. This time snatches the spittoon from its bearer, looks at it and passes it in front of his war club to see)* A handsome piece. There was a true champion. I could never have won that fight if it had not happened he had a toothache that day. He put one hand to his suffering jaw. That was his undoing. His club was so heavy he needed both hands to lift it! *(A chuckle. Passes his hand over the spittoon)* These teeth that were a pain to him, to me they are things of pride and beauty. *(Returns spittoon to bearer)* You and I now, we prefer to stay home, ensconced among our mementos and our memories. At our age, there's nothing quite like home. *(Servants bring in two lighted torches. Set them at both sides of the stage. He looks up uneasily)* Dusk sets in. Daughter should have returned ages ago. *(A SERVANT enters, somewhat out of breath. Kneels hurriedly.)*

SERVANT

O chief, the young chiefess is on her way.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

Alone?

SERVANT

Not alone.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

A man?

SERVANT

Somewhat like a man.

*(A gesture dismisses servant. Claps hands. Rises. All four bearers rise and get busy. They fetch a helmet and a feather cloak of black feathers lined with white. He exchanges his tapa cloak for the feather cloak and dons the helmet. A bearer hands him his war club. Meanwhile, the mat has*

*been cleared of its tapa cushions, and the basketry bundles that line the back wall are brought forward. A bearer hurriedly dumps into the tray assorted bones out of a sack. Kalonaikaha'ila'au takes his stand in the center of the mat, one hand on his hip, the other on top of his club held vertically. Tall as the man is, his war club dwarfs him.)*

*(Enter Kanewahineikiaoha holding hands with Kawelo. They stop at the edge of the stage.)*

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

*(Hushed tone. To Kawelo) My papa. (She goes to father, curtseys, exits. All four bearers exit after her.)*

KAWELO

*(Looks around dreamily. Softly to himself) Beautiful home. So many kinds of rare woods.*

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

*(Thunderingly) Your name?*

KAWELO

*(Meekly) Kawelo.*

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

Your genealogy?

KAWELO

We are of peasant stock, sir. Farmers, fishermen, and the like.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

*(Clears his throat. Looks in vain for spittoon. Wipes his mouth with his free hand) Your achievements?*

KAWELO

None, sir, unless to mash poi and daily warm the oven be called such.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

Do you wrestle? Do you box, dance, or swim?

KAWELO

No, sir, not to speak of.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

Throw the spear, handle a war club?

KAWELO

No, sir. I am good with an adze, but only at carving wood. I use the bow and arrow, but only to shoot bats or rats.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

*(Oratorically. This is obviously an oft-told tale) I am Kalonaikaha'ila'au, warrior above all warriors, champion of champions. (Points with his club to one of the bundles) Those are the bones of Ka'ehuikiawakea, the great champion of Hawaii. My first kill. (Watches Kawelo. No reaction) But you are too young to remember his name. (Points to another bundle) The late Kamakaokahoku, a greater champion, from Kauai. My seventh kill. (Pauses. No reaction. Points to another bundle) There lies Hilinuiwawaeahu, late champion of champions, born on Molokai. My seventieth kill. Surely you have heard of him! (No reaction. Shrugs. Now he points to bones on tray) Many others, nondescript. (Kalonaikaha'ila'au now holds his war club horizontally with both hands. He raises it up and down as he flexes his legs, feet apart, then freezes, club held in front of him at arm's length. His voice rises to an enormous pitch) And here is a champion even greater than I, my companion, my faithful war club, feared the world over, bloodied with the blood of a thousand kills, by name Waihie'eka'eka!*

*(Kawelo is really interested now. He comes close, peers intently at the club. The old warrior watches him foxily.)*

KAWELO  
Termites.

*(Disconcerted, Kalonaikaha'ila'au quickly resumes his first posture, club held vertically. Kawelo steps back.)*

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU  
My daughter is my daughter and I am her father.

KAWELO  
Yes, sir. I want your daughter to come and live with me. She says if you agree, she'll do just that.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU  
I agree on one condition.

KAWELO  
And I agree to your condition, sir. So it's all set.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU  
My condition is a duel, fought with war clubs. To the death.

KAWELO  
But your daughter loves you too, sir. She said so. Should she lose a father to gain a husband?

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU  
*(Exasperated)* Young man, simple peasant, one hundred and seventy other young men up to now have asked my daughter in marriage. She still is single. Do I make myself clear?

KAWELO  
Yes, sir. I have no club of my own. You'll have to lend me one.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU  
*(Points to war-club rack)* Take your pick.

*(Kawelo goes to the rack and carefully tries the clubs. He settles for the smallest one, the size and shape of a baseball bat.)*

*(Meanwhile, at a clap of the master's hands, servants re-enter. Accessories are removed. The mat is cleared as a sort of arena for the coming fight. Kalonaikaha'ila'au exercises, somewhat perfunctorily, swinging his club in various ways. Kawelo comes forward with his club as a servant brings in a very large basket and a coil of rope.)*

KAWELO

*(To servant)* What is the basket for?

SERVANT

To bundle you in sir, when we clean up. *(Kawelo tries his club. He holds it just as a batter would a baseball bat, and swings it the same way.)*

KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

*(Thunderously)* What a posture! This way, fellow, this way! *(Legs open, he swings his club in a large arc on a central axis, as far back as it may go, then lets it fall so as to hit the ground with an explosive sound.)*

KAWELO

*(Tries it but reverts to his first posture)* I like it better this way. Let's begin, sir.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

Begin what? Oh. The fight. Boy, your manners are abominable. No surprise, as you are a peasant. Who would think of beginning a fight with a fight? Preposterous! First, you taunt me. *(Kawelo looks blank)* Taunt me. Say something that will make me mad, and then I'll answer. Get it?

## KAWELO

If you wish. You are a nasty old man. You make your daughter unhappy. You do care for her, but you care more for yourself. And when you are in your dotage, which you soon will be, you hope she'll massage your ancient carcass and dance and sing for you. You are a nasty old man. *(Pulls his tongue noisily at Kalonaikaha'ila'au, in what we recognize as a Bronx cheer)* You sag.

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

*(Connoisseur-like)* Good for a beginner. But one doesn't simply say those things. One chants them. You stated you shoot rats?

## KAWELO

Yes, sir.

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

Good. Brace yourself. *(Chants, adopting varied and menacing postures, theatrically emphasized)*

Daughter, don't waste your lust on a misfit,  
 A despicable rat-catcher.  
 To call me his father-in-law he would bribe me with rats.  
 To his beloved wife he would feed rats,  
 But not before he had his fill of them.  
 Our precious Kamalama he would raise up on a rat fare.  
 What does he bring to the temple as a choice offering?  
 Rats, of course, and on feast days, bats!  
 Bats, rats, are they meat fit for gods?  
 Rats, bats, is that what the chiefess accustoms?  
 Daughter, don't waste your lust on this misfit.  
*(Con conversationally)* Some days I can do better, but it takes a while to warm up. Your turn.

## KAWELO

*(Chants in a clear, high-pitched voice that contrasts with the deep bass of Kalonaikaha'ila'au. No gestures)*

I weep for the girl whose father you are,  
 Lovely Kanewahineikiaoha.  
 You are rough, you are gruff, you are tough.  
 She is everything you are not.  
 Mean lizard, you stand guard at the door of your cave,  
 And inside the lady weeps for loneliness,  
 While outside pile up the bones  
 Of young men who could have brought her happiness.  
 A blood-drinking and bone-chewing lizard are you.

#### KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

*(Stamps his foot)* I don't like that, don't like it at all. I'll  
 kill you for it. My turn. *(Chanting)*

Look at the puppet with a war club.  
 A misfit.  
 Not one of us, daughter, this would-be husband.  
 He is a tenderfoot,  
 A sandpiper that flits along the seashore,  
 Looking for garbage to feed on.  
 A slap from the rising tide  
 Shall turn him upside down, legs up.  
 Down he hangs like the stem of the banana bud.  
 Like the aerial rootlets of the hala, he droops.  
 Forget him, daughter. He is not one of us.  
 The fellow shall snap in two like a dry twig.  
 Only your father can lift the family war club,  
 And the wind, to undo him, shall need to uproot him.

Your turn.

#### KAWELO

Let's fight. All that chanting makes me weak.

#### KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

*(Heated up by now)* To the mat!

*(Both take their stance on the mat, facing each other, in profile. Kalonaiakaha'ila'au's stance is*

*most impressive: legs apart, club held with both hands, its top resting at the moment on the mat, only a few inches from Kawelo's feet. Kawelo's stance is most unimpressive. He is hunched sidewise in the attitude of a baseball batter, also resting the tip of his small club on the mat, but sideways. His eyes, however, are focused on his opponent's face.)*

**KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU**  
(A deep growl) Now.

*(He raises his war club upward until it is directly above his head, then tips it backward ever so little to increase the length of its lethal arc. Kawelo, who has not moved until then, swings his club from down up. It is an effortless gesture. The club funneling its way between the open legs of the old warrior naturally lands on his groin. It is only a medium blow. Jarred out of poise by this unexpected tap at his genitals, and further unbalanced by the weight of his heavy club, Kalonaikaha'ila'au falls backward with a prolonged bellow that brings in at a run, not only the servants, but his daughter and son as well. All rush at his "corpse" and, arms raised, start premature and heartfelt lamentations.)*

**ALL**  
Auwe! Auwe!

*(Kawelo, looking rather sheepish, rests at ease on his club. Kalonaikaha'ila'au grunts, then clears his throat thunderously as he raises himself to a sitting position. He handles cautiously his skull and his jaw as if to find out what did it. Then, with a grimace of pain, he rubs the inside of his thighs.)*



KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

*(Hoarse)* The secret stroke. The secret stroke, he knows it! *(Shakes his head disbelievingly. To Kawelo)* I said to the death, son-in-law. Finish me. I beg of you, finish me.

KAWELO

You call me "son-in-law"?

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

Of course. I know when I am beaten. The girl is yours. The boy is yours. My servants are yours, and my lands. My carcass is yours. *(Rises somewhat painfully. Hands Kawelo his war club)* My beloved companion, my faithful war club, Wahie'eka'eka by name, is yours. Finish me.

*(The old man now cries as loudly and as heartily as anything he does. As a suggestion, taps with his hand the top of his lowered head. Kanewahine-ikiaoha and Kamalama turn to Kawelo.)*

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

*(Kneels at his feet)* I shall follow you anywhere you go, Kawelo. I shall obey every one of your commands.

KAMALAMA

*(Same action)* I shall be like a younger brother to you, Kawelo. I shall try to obey, though I don't know how.

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

*(Embraces his thighs)* Spare father.

KAMALAMA

*(Same action)* Spare father and let me keep my chicken.

KAWELO

So shall it be. Keep your chicken, Kamalama, and your papa shall keep both his life and his war club. *(Returns war club to his brand new father-in-law.)*

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

*(Takes club and hugs it. Heartily)* Son-in-law, son-in-law, my only regret is that I do not have twenty daughters as beautiful as the one, to give them all to you. *(Thunderously)* No son-in-law of mine shall ever be a commoner.

## KAWELO

*(Now hugging Kanewahineikiaoha and being hugged by Kama-lama)* What can you do about it?

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

I shall raise you to high chiefhood with the means in my power. When that is done, you shall rate, as I do, a kahili-bearer and a *kapu*-stick bearer, a fanbearer and a spittoon-bearer. Kneel. *(Kawelo kneels. Kalonaihaha'ila'au extends the corners of his cloak as a canopy over Kawelo. In a rapid monotone mumbles a formula. In a minute the ceremony is over. Loudly)* Rise, son.

## KAWELO

*(Rising)* Son-in-law.

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

*(Firmly)* I said "son." I have just adopted you, son. By law, you are now both my son and my son-in-law. Your lineage is as ancient as mine. In fact, it is the same.

*(To all others present, with a sweeping gesture.)*

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

My son, my son-in-law, and myself, we have private business to discuss: the division of the estates, and so forth.

*(Exit all but Kalonaihaha'ila'au and Kawelo. They walk to and fro, Kalonaihaha'ila'au's arm around Kawelo's shoulders.)*

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

Son, you heard me as I came out of my swoon refer to a secret stroke. As you well know, there is no such thing.

Only my stupidity in choosing a stance that left me wide open. But the world need not know what happened. My daughter, her brother, they need never know what happened. Understand. You defeated me by a secret stroke!

KAWELO

I understand, father. Very well, father-in-law. A secret stroke is what did it!

KALONAIKAHA'ILA' AU

Good. Oh! I should have mentioned it before--you are now the champion of champions. From now on, all the kings of the earth, as far as far-off Kahiki, shall outbid each other for your services. And every champion and would-be champion shall train all the harder in the hope of defeating you some day! I know how it is. Well, good luck.

*(Exits. Enter Kanewahineikiaoha. Stops short of Kawelo.)*

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

*(Softly)* Kawelo.

*(Kawelo turns towards her. They hold hands. Exit.)*



## ACT ONE

*SCENE 4: A fenced enclosure used as a gymnasium, at the court of Kakuhihewa, King of Oahu.*

*The king's champions are in training, men picked for stature and for strength. They wear wide red malos, high-waisted and with flaps front and back that reach below the knee. The short red tapa cape at their back marks them as officers of the king.*

*Two rehearse a war dance, with foot stomping, basso expletives, the twirling of coconut rattlers topped with plumes.*

*A pair jousts with spears. Another pair alternates low blows with the war club, which force the opponent to a defensive jump.*

*Two wrestlers, grasping at each other's belt with one hand, practice holds and falls. Two boxers spar, their fists lightly bandaged with tapa tape, their stance and technique reminiscent of old sporting prints. Center background, the referee, bigger and taller even than the other athletes. He sits at ease on a throne of fine mats piled high. He is Kauahoa, Kawelo's cousin, grown to manhood. On his lap, his war club. At his feet, lightly massaging his ankles, two young women inclined to fatness. Mouth closed, they hum a love tune, and swing at its rhythm as they work.*

*After a fall, one of the wrestlers fails to rise. The other looks towards Kauahoa inquiringly.*

KAUAHOA

What is it?

WRESTLER

A broken ankle.

KAUAHOA

Finish him.

*(As the man hesitates, Kauahoa rises, goes to the fallen wrestler, club in hand. One stroke of the club synchronized with one agonized shriek. Kauahoa returns to his place and sits down with a good-natured laugh.)*

KAUAHOA

And dump him far into the ocean. I don't want it to float back to shore a month later.

*(Girls hum, champions train, as the live wrestler drags the dead one off stage.)*

*(Enter foreground a nondescript man. His only clothing is a commoner's loincloth, gray and flapless. He slowly fans himself with a leaf fan. His head is shaved. His features tend to a leer. His eyes are shifty. He is KAKUHIHEWA, King of Oahu. A man with a war club is first to spot the king and freezes, club raised. Now all turn toward the king. In a moment all lie flat on the ground, their fists over their eyes. Last to do so is Kauahoa, though his haste is ludicrous as he slips down from his high place.)*

KAKUHIHEWA

*(Unhurriedly walks between the prone bodies, and seats himself in Kauahoa's place. Dryly) Taboo is lifted.*

*(All rise and stand, facing him, except Kauahoa and the girls. Girls exit without rising, crawling*

*backward so as not to turn their backs on the king. Kauahoa remains prone, looking anxiously up at the king.)*

#### KAKUHIHEWA

*(To Kauahoa)* Kauahoa, you are, as a rule, a dutiful servant. I might for this once--this once, mind you--forget how I found you defiling the royal mat. *(Kauahoa raises himself on one knee, head down)* I was watching while you dispatched this useless champion. I commend you for your thrift.

*(Kauahoa rises, obviously shaken.)*

#### KAKUHIHEWA

*(To all, with cutting disdain)* To feed and shelter, to clothe and train, growing boys takes much substance out of one's wealth, be he a king. Uncounted calabashes of poi, sackfuls of greens, generations of chickens and of dogs, caneloads of pigs. It was hard to inject fighting skills into your peasant frames. It was harder to beat into your dull skulls the rules of royal etiquette. Come war, such a heavy outlay of goods, of patience, and of time, shall be repaid in full. However, as you have just seen, the moment your usefulness ceases, you revert to the only birthright that is yours--to be trampled underfoot by your betters, or else thrown back into the muck and slime wherein you were born. I have no truck with newfangled ideas. Some of my younger chiefs who harbored such ideas in their heads, died headless. *(Fans himself as he surveys his champions)* Now to business. My runners brought momentous news concerning the champion of champions, famed Kalonaikaha'ila'au. Two days ago he was challenged once again. This time he was defeated. We shall presume his death. *(Murmurs among the men. At a mild move of the king's fan, murmurs cease)* As to the man who did this deed, nothing as yet is known about him. He is as nameless as he is faceless. As to the manner of the deed, this unknown achieved such a formidable upset thanks to a secret stroke of the war club. So secret and so potent a stroke that Kalonaikaha'ila'au fell before he could even attempt to strike back. *(Murmurs, again stilled by one motion of the king's fan)* This secret stroke amounts to a

distinct and superior weapon. For any king at war, it may bridge the chasm between defeat and victory. (*Forcefully*) I want that secret! (*A pause*) Any suggestions? (*Silence*) It pleases me that none of you presumes to cast himself in the role of king's adviser. Again, any suggestions? (*Silence*) A command!

#### A CHAMPION

(*Kneeling*) O lord, we are ready to challenge this new champion of champions.

#### KAKUHIHEWA

(*Dryly*) You are hardly ready. I could send you to him one by one as live men. You would be returned to me one by one as dead men. No tale could be told and the secret would remain a secret. (*Shamed, the champion rises*) Other suggestions? (*Silence*) A command!

#### ANOTHER CHAMPION

(*Kneels*) O lord, this new champion, if he is one of your subjects, command him to share his secret with his king.

#### KAKUHIHEWA

(*Ponders*) Here politics intrude. Old Kalonaikaha'ila'au, claiming antique rights, ever refused to exchange black for red, and to wear my livery. He was so popular with so many, I spared the rebel. Not so those genealogists who insisted that his blood was more royal than mine. By birth, his daughter inherits these so-called rights. And now she is spoils for the victor. No. (*Champion rises. Kauahoa kneels. To Kauahoa*) Speak.

#### KAUAHOA

O lord, it is hardly fit I speak, face to face with your radiant presence.

#### KAKUHIHEWA

Make it short.



## KAUAHOA

The daughter could be kidnapped. That would force the fellow to follow. A battle in the open would disclose his secret.

## KAKUHIHEWA

No doubt he would give up the girl rather than displease such a king as I. No. (*Kauahoa rises*) A single combat shall be fought. My spies will watch and report. So the dead man will have his tale told for him. A single challenger. A single death. Again, thrift. (*To Kauahoa*) Go then and challenge him. Leave tomorrow. (*King exits.*)

## KAUAHOA

(*To champions*) Bathe and eat. (*Champions exit, looking toward Kauahoa as a sort of adieu. Kauahoa sits on a low stone at side of stage*) So I am commanded to die. For a moment, it seemed our lord would spare the life I had forfeited for usurping the royal mat. Didn't he say so? No. What he said was "I might forgive you " And that is not at all the same as "I forgive you." Well, tomorrow I go to my death, and that's that. I have been the ablest one at all sports. The handiest with all weapons. I lived high. I slept soundly. I ate my fill and more than my fill. What was missing? I suppose Granny. The fare she gave me as a small boy was below court standards, mostly poi. But her toothless smile, I remember it more winning than the laughter of young girls. I was always so hungry I stole her chickens. And she would beat me with a twig, or just with her bony knuckles. I was so tough and she was so frail. It hurt her more than it did me. That cousin Kawelo, how I hate him. The little runt basked in Granny's love indecently. He got the better part of it, I, the crumbs. But love crumbs are better than none. The day I left home, the last thing I did was curse Kawelo. Even when we were babies, I could have beaten him to a pulp and smashed his thin skull. That skull of his, how it fascinated me. It held more surprises than any fisherman's net or any calabash shelved high. He enraged me, but I couldn't quite make up my mind to kill him, because I wanted to know what his next trick would be. And his adze, too, it was as full of surprises as his head. That toy soldier he carved for me. How it helped me dream dreams of glory. I

hate him though. That last trick he played on me, that kite string he wound around my arms as they were readying a blow to hurt him. (*Passes his hands over his biceps*) I still feel its slight insistent pressure. From that moment dates the one flaw in my make-up. (*Looks up with a touch of hysteria*) The horror I feel for flying things, especially kites! The blow I intended for cousin Kawelo shall never land. I have only until tomorrow to hate him, when all that is me shall end. I feel fit. To this faceless and nameless opponent I shall give a hard fight. (*Puts fist to his eyes, cries manfully. Whispers*) Granny . . .





## ACT TWO

*SCENE 1: Same set as Act I, Scene 3. Interior of Kalonaikaha'ila'au's house.*

*The more grizzly mementos have been removed. Daylight enters freely. A chiefly family group, center, Kawelo and wife. Kamalama, holding his chicken, sits by Kawelo. Kalonaikaha'ila'au, war club in his lap, sits by Kanewahine-ikiahaha. All wear flower leis and are busy stringing flowers into leis. The tray in front of the mat is now full of flowers. The kahili-bearer, kapu-stick-bearer, spittoon-bearer, and fanbearer are at their posts.*

### KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

I so love you, Kawelo. I never knew heads could contain such ideas as yours. Of course, I love to sleep with you. But it is more than that. You showed me how to look at things with your eyes. I used to look at a tree for its fruit to eat, or its bark to beat into tapa. I would look at a man for his strength for protection, or for status, or as an escape from loneliness. I rarely looked at the skies, only to see if rain would come, or what kind of wind was blowing. And I knew the stars to be useful for mapping canoe trips. Now that I live with you, everything has been confused and clarified. Confused because, seen with your eyes, trees, men and stars, they are all alike, a spectacle, a dance, a prayer, one. In the hula he who would single out a hip, or a hand, or a breast would miss the dance. And that was the way I looked at the world before you taught me better: a detail here, a detail there. This lei we string, it is not just one flower,

and one flower, and one flower. It is something new, something more than what goes into it.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

*(Portentous grumbling)* Daughter, you talk nonsense. What bothers me is my eyes. Stringing flowers strains them. And I can't get accustomed to flowers. They smell bad. Or maybe not. But they are such womanly things. *(Stops work)* Also, I am worried. Any moment now, I expect a first challenge. A first challenger for you, Kawelo. What shall we do?

KAWELO

Glorious father-in-law, beloved father, the answer is simple. I shall use once more my secret stroke of the war club. Didn't it defeat you?

KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

*(Stentoriously clears his throat. The spittoon-bearer, kneeling on the other side of the group, attempts his task, but is far from reach. Kalonaiקה'ila'au gleefully spits on the ground)* Son, I haven't the faintest idea of what my daughter is grateful about, but I know one thing. I am grateful you taught me how to spit on the floor.

KAMALAMA

Brother Kawelo, I have a keen idea. You said the insides of trees are full of toys. Father's war clubs, they are very much like trees. Let's have a good look inside!

KAWELO

No. I guess that inside these war clubs, made of such seasoned wood and for so heroic a purpose, one should find gods rather than toys.

KAMALAMA

*(Greedy eyeing his father's own war club)* Let's see what's inside Wahie'eka'eka! *(Kalonaiקה'ila'au protectively embraces his club, away from Kamalama. A servant enters slightly out of breath. Kneels on one knee to Kalonaiקה'ila'au.)*

## SERVANT

O chief... (*Kalonaikaha'ila'au points to Kawelo. Servant switches knees. Addresses Kawelo*) O young chief, a challenger asks entry, claiming his right of challenge! (*All four put the leis they were stringing on the tray. The four bearers rise, scoop up leis and unstrung flowers from the tray, exit.*)

## KAWELO

Did he state his name?

## SERVANT

He said his name was Kauahoa.

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

(*A snort*) Top man of the champions owned by this so-called king, Kakuhihewa. His rating as a killer is high indeed. Why would that sly Kakuhihewa send him on such a fool's errand? To test Kawelo, of course. I bet spies sneaked in, tucked under his feather cloak! Foul fellows, spies! Crooked shoulders and knock-kneed gait, just like their master. (*Half rises, club in hand*) Son, I'll go spy-hunting. I'll beat the bushes. I'll shake the trees....

## KAWELO

Please, father. Do not flush these fellows into the open. I want them to report to their master. (*Nonplussed, Kalonaikaha'ila'au sits down. To servant, waiting*) Receive the challenger as hospitably as you can. But delay his coming. This room needs tidying up. (*Servant exits. Musingly*) So, cousin Kauahoa is at the gate. Poor fellow, ever so simple. I bet all spruced up in feathers, and seething for revenge.

## KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

Cousin Kauahoa?

## KAWELO

We grew up together, but not always in harmony.

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

(*Rising*) Son, the reputation of Kauahoa, cousin or not, is formidable. Let me take care of him, me and Wahie'eka'eka. (*Pats his club, snorts expectantly.*)

KAWELO

Father, this is a family affair. Cousin is my only living blood relative. I shall attend to him myself.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

*(Rising)* Then, I'll take a peek at the spies. *(Exits, swinging his club. Kanewahineikiaoha and Kamalama rise to follow him.)*

KAWELO

Wife, little brother, stay with me. It will be more family-like. First, we shall entertain cousin with games. He always had a sweet tooth for toys. *(To Kamalama)* Little brother, you have a kite?

KAMALAMA

Sure.

KAWELO

Good. Bring it.... *(Kamalama is already on his way. Calls after him)...*and don't forget the string! *(To Kanewahineikiaoha)* Wife, nothing is ready for our guest. Cousin is always hungry.

*(Kanewahineikiaoha claps hands. Servant enters. She points to tray.)*

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

*(To servant)* Fill it with snacks.

*(Servant exits. Enter Kamalama with kite. It is a square tapa stretched over two crossbars, lots of string.)*

KAWELO

*(To Kamalama)* Little brother, do you wish to join in the fray? *(Boy nods head in assent, emphatically)* Then go outside. When you see cousin coming, start flying your kite. *(Winks)* And if the string should get in his way, no harm done.



KAMALAMA

Is that all, brother? Couldn't I punch him on the nose, too?

KAWELO

No. Do as I say. *(Exit Kamalama running with kite. Servant returns with banana leaves and laulaus, snacks wrapped in ti-leaves. Lays banana leaves over tray and laulaus on top. Exits. To Kanewahineikiaoha)* You shall receive cousin as he enters. Seat him on the mat, facing the food. Say I shall join him soon, but do not mention me by name. Keep him at ease while he eats. Then go.

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

Is that all?

KAWELO

That is all.

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

Your war club, is it at hand?

KAWELO

No need of a weapon. Kamalama already has won the fight for me. *(Exits.)*

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

My lot is to love mad men. Father is peculiar, and so is Kawelo.

*(Off stage a strangled shriek. Kauahoa enters. He is dressed up in his very best. His red malo is extra wide. The very high waistband tucks in his belly. The wide flaps reach to the calves. His red feather cape is of elbow length. His helmet is of red feathers. Cradled in his arms, a large war club. But something is wrong. He staggers in, leans against the upright of the grass wall, kicking at something in his way.)*

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

*(Perfect hostess)* Enter. Make yourself at home. What is wrong?

## KAUAHOA

That boy, playing outside?

## KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

My young brother, Kamalama by name. *(Wordlessly, Kauahoa points to his foot, the kite string looped around the ankle. Immediately, Kanewahineikiaoha is on her knees at his feet; frees him. Rises.)*

## KAUAHOA

*(Hand over his eyes)* I was not expecting--a kite. *(He recovers. Belatedly adopts a martial posture, club held horizontally with both hands, feet apart. Takes in the room.)*

## KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

Your host, the champion of champions, bids you be seated, O champion Kauahoa. Your journey may have forced upon you scanty meals. Restore yourself at your leisure. *(Points to mat.)*

## KAUAHOA

*(Brightening)* I don't mind if I eat. I miss my five meals a day. *(Sits on mat, facing food tray, cautiously laying down his club within easy reach. Hurriedly undoes the leaf-wrapping of a laulau, gobbles its contents in one mouthful. Repeats the performance a number of times. Gracefully, Kanewahineikiaoha seats herself by him. Mollified, now that his appetite is on the wane, Kauahoa gives her an appreciative look)* You are class. *(Kanewahineikiaoha nods in quiet agreement. One more laulau and the meal is over. Kauahoa noisily beats a tattoo on his chest with his fists. A belch)* I am full.

*(Kanewahineikiaoha exits unobtrusively. Kauahoa puts both elbows on the tray. Drowsiness begins, but his eyes are wide open. Off stage, Kawelo's voice chants, first softly, then acquires volume, then tapers off toward the end. The two first and two last lines very soft.)*

## KAWELO

*(Chanting)**O na wa kamali'i - e!**He mea e ka pili - e!*

Oh, the days of our childhood!  
 How the memory lingers!  
 Nets sunk deep into the sea  
 Bring back a rich haul to see!  
 Two boys in Kailua  
 One a chicken. One a cock.  
 One had sharp spurs. One brittle legs.  
 One could crow facing the sun.  
 One could only squint at the sun.  
 How the memory lingers!

The wrist sprained in childish wars,  
 Granny kissed it and taped it.  
 The toe pinched by a giant crab,  
 Big cousin bravely set it free.  
 The toy that small cousin adzed,  
 Big boy loved it and hugged it  
 When no one was around to see.  
 How the memory lingers!

Drenched were the mossy uplands.  
 The fog wreathed the lehua trees.  
 Two boys, arms heavy with buds,  
 Come home from uphill hikes  
 Eager to garland their granny.  
 How the memory lingers!

Let us shelve the wars, cousin.  
 Replace strife with sleep.  
 Stop mulling over your cousin, cousin.  
 Or is one more fight ahead?

Oh, the days of our youth!  
 Their memory clings forever!

*O no wa kamali'i - e!**He mea e ka pili - e!*

*(Kauahoa, all through the chanting, has remained immobile, as if the voice was that of his thought. Still off stage, in as gruff a voice as Kawelo can manage)* Is this the great Kauahoa? Is this Kauahoa, famed killer?

KAUAHOA

*(All action now, seizes his war club and rises)* It is. *(Looks about; sees no one.)*

KAWELO

You grew strong on Kakuhihewa's fare, eating your king's pigs and your king's taro. Were you born at court?

KAUAHOA

I was not, Voice. I was born in Kailua.

KAWELO

Is it not true that, to grow strong, you stole chickens as a boy?

KAUAHOA

Voice, Voice, show thyself!

KAWELO

*(His own voice)* Look this way. *(Enter Kawelo, dressed in his usual tapa, minus leis, cradling in one arm what seems a minute war club.)*

KAUAHOA

*(Scrutinizes him, then bellows)* Cousin Kawelo! *(Raises his club high. Intensely)* At last! I trained hard! I nursed my revenge a lifetime! I thought, hated cousin, that the blow I kept for a lifetime idle would never catch up with you. Chance arranges this meeting between us, our last! Cousin Kawelo, I do not wish to know which crafty trick of yours tripped a noble champion. Before the world, you may be champion of champions. For me, you are the one quarry I have forever sought. The one kill for which past kills were but a rehearsal. Cousin Kawelo, you are dead. The chant has been chanted and the taunt delivered. Between you and death there is only one blow, and this club, in Kauahoa's fists, is now lifted to strike it.

## KAWELO

*(Mildly)* Cousin, I too have something in my hand that may intrigue you. *(Opens arms and presents, held upright on the palms of his extended hands, a toy warrior, carved in wood. Kauahoa freezes in his heroic stance, looks intensely at the toy soldier)* Take it, big cousin. All this time, while you were nursing revenge, I carried your little man in my sack. I knew some day you would be glad to have it back. *(Kauahoa drops his war club, which clatters thunderously to the ground. His mouth open in disbelief, his arms and hands idle at his sides)* Take it for keeps. *(Kauahoa slowly extends both hands toward the toy, palms upward. Kawelo gently cradles in them the wooden warrior.)*

*(Kalonaikaha'ila'au enters background, in black cloak and helmet, Wahia'eka'eka in hand. Two servants are with him. He gives them inaudible orders, signaling with gestures a tortuous itinerary to be followed outside. Servants exit. Kalonaikaha'ila'au assumes a pose of dignified indifference.)*

## KAWELO

What are you up to, father-in-law?

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

*(Injured innocence)* Could I leave the bodies to foul up the hala grove?

## KAWELO

*(Wags a finger at him)* What bodies?

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

Truth is I am not good at spying on spies. These fellows saw me. They made nasty remarks. *(Sheepishly)* I won't do it again. *(Kalonaikaha'ila'au advances center stage. Sets himself forward, as if on parade, club held vertically in front of him.)*

## KAUAHOA

Kalonaikaha'ila'au! Alive! *(Kneels to him on one knee with unfeigned admiration. Kalonaikaha'ila'au turns his head toward him, then toward Kawelo.)*

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

Your cousin, son? (*Kawelo nods. Kalonaikaha'ila'au's head turns back toward Kauahoa.*)

## KAUAHOA

(*One hand reaching toward Kalonaikaha'ila'au's war club*)  
And this club, it is the great Wahie'eka'eka? (*Kalonaikaha'ila'au nods. Kauahoa respectfully touches club with his fingertips.*)

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

Rise, Kauahoa, brave warrior. Given my son-in-law's new-fangled ideas, from now on I reckon you will be accounted one of us. Only, cousin, you must change the color of your livery from Kakuhihewa's red to our family black. Red hurts my eyes. (*Kauahoa rises*) Cousin, I understand your style is perfect with up-down and down-up strokes, but not so your sideswipes. I'll show you a few tricks.

(*Kauahoa lovingly stands his toy statuette on the tray and picks up his war club. The two warriors engage in mock battle, their gestures punctuated by the knocking of club against club, foot stomping, and loud war whoops. Meanwhile, Kanewahine-ikiaoha and Kamalama enter, flower leis about their heads and necks. They go to Kawelo and put leis on his head and about his shoulders, humming softly.*)







## ACT TWO

*SCENE 2: A cave. On the floor of the cave, men are lying prone, their hands over their eyes. King Kakuhihewa walks to a low stone, background center, and sits on it. He is dressed in the same dun-colored loincloth he wore in Act I, Scene 4. He claps his hands once.*

KAKUHIHEWA

*(Dryly)* Taboo is lifted.

*(The men open their eyes. They squat, cross-legged, in a half circle on both sides of the king. They are dressed in malos and tapa cloaks of non-descript colors, dun, gray, brown, gray-green, chosen to blend with earth, moss, and stone. All are extremely furtive. Some wrap a fold of their cloak over their mouths. Others pull it over their heads as a hood, covering their eyes. Gestures are as stealthy as the attire. The only exceptions are TWO SOOTHSAYERS in red malos and white cloaks, crowned with maile leaves. One holds a small calabash, the other a whisk of maile leaves. They take no part in the proceedings until called.)*

KAKUHIHEWA

Welcome, faithful servants, royal spies, royal thieves, and royal thugs. *(In acknowledgement, all bow to the ground from the waist with acrobatic agility)* To expedite matters, etiquette for the while shall be shelved. This meeting is

informal. (*Another mowing down of torsos greets the announcement. All inch their way closer to the king*) The situation has become intolerable. Let us map our future course. It was one thing to have this old rebel refuse obeisance to his rightful king. It is another to see a young upstart wax so powerful as to become a threat to law and order, meaning myself. Kalonaikaha'ila'au was a harmless codger. He killed for fame, or in anger, at times for caprice, but never for power. A romantic, the defunct champion of champions. This Kawelo seems different. Entrenched on the dead man's estate, with a claim to royalty yet another of his spoils, he is a political menace. His ambition must be immense, his craftiness intense, his stealth unsurpassed. Should we admit that we meet our match?

#### HEARERS

(*Another mowing down of torsos*) No, no, no!

#### KAKUHIHEWA

His secret stroke of the war club is still secret. Our efforts to pry it out sap our strength. Should my school for champions become a charnel house? My nursery of spies be depleted? Intolerable! His secret must be found out, and quickly, before the balance of power swings to him. Any suggestions? (*Another swaying low of torsos, silently*) Come, come. I said informal. All of us have fertile brains. Speak freely.

#### THIEF

O king, if there is anything at all you wish stolen, I can do it. Didn't I steal for you the magic cowrie shells of Kea'au, straight from the bottom of the sea? And the sacred axe of Paka'alana, tied though it was to the neck of its two watchful guardians? If this secret can be stolen, O king, tomorrow it shall be yours.

#### KAKUHIHEWA

You and I see as one, master thief. Bring me Kawelo tomorrow. You shall be rewarded. (*Thief hunches, and ponders, hand to chin.*)

## THUG

*(Plays with a red cord held in both hands. At his feet there is a wooden container)* O lord, you know how faithful an assassin I have been. Both with the strangling cord *(Holds cord up, then passes it over his head. It rests, lei-like, on his shoulders)*, and with poisons. But my craft is more subtle, more nuanced, than routine practice implies. Portions are brewed that loosen the tongue. *(Holds up container)* This drug will purge the mind of all of its contents with or without the purged one's consent.

## KAKUHIHEWA

Excellent. Now ponder, O faithful assassin, how Kawelo may be made to drink it. *(Thug hunches, hand to chin, ponders.)*

## POLITICIAN

O king, my craft is related to, but not identical with, the crafts of these others. I am a politician. This island proves too small for both of you. Send Kawelo on some far-flung errand. Deflect his strength against another king.

## KAKUHIHEWA

This appeals to my sense of thrift. Our cousin of Hawaii, King 'Aimoku, irritates me. Ponder, O politician, how to pit Kawelo against him. *(Politician hunches, hand to chin, and ponders. To men in white)* Soothsayers, say your sooth.

*(One holds the small calabash to the other, who lightly brushes its contents with the whisk. Both peer intently inside. Their predictions alternate.)*

## SOOTHSAYER 1

*(Chanted)*

*Kekahi haina i ke ahiahi.*

*Moe ka pua'a 'a'aua.*

*Kaumaha ke 'kua.*

*Akua mana 'ole.*

## SOOTHSAYER 2

*(Enunciated)*

For sacrifice this evening

A pig dead of starvation.

It saddens the god.

His strength ebbs.

*He uku ke ō o ke akua,*

*O ke 'kua 'ai mō'i.*

Can he get strong on lice,

He who feeds on kings?

KAKUHIHEWA

Well?

SOOTHSAYER 1

The god is sad. Temple offerings have been skimpy.

SOOTHSAYER 2

His sadness may change to wrath.

SOOTHSAYER 1

Unless a king is sacrificed.

*(A dismissal gesture from the king. Exit sooth-sayers.)*

KAKUHIHEWA

The pieces fit together. Kawelo must be induced to come. And persuaded to go to war against Hawaii. Defeated, King 'Aimoku shall be sacrificed to the god. Again thrift. I shall waste neither my might nor my pigs.

*(A LOOKOUT stealthily rushes in. Quick obeisance to the king. In a stage whisper.)*

LOOKOUT

A man coming, cloaked in black.

*(Sensation. All torsos sway as if in the wind.)*

KAKUHIHEWA

Alone?

LOOKOUT

Alone.

KAKUHIHEWA

Armed?

LOOKOUT

A weapon may be under his cloak. *(Exit lookout.)*

*(Two of the men furtively vanish. The rest are poised for flight.)*

KAKUHIHEWA

Come, friends. A man alone is no threat to us. However, a king, to remain a king, must be cautious. *(To thief)* Change places with your lord. *(Reluctantly, the thief sits on the stone, center. Kakuhihewa makes himself small, cross-legged foreground, farthest away from center. Enter Kawelo in black tapa cloak.)*

KAWELO

I am by name Kawelo. Which one of you is Kakuhihewa?

KAKUHIHEWA

*(Points to thief)* Meet the great lord, King Kakuhihewa.

KAWELO

*(Laughs. Addresses himself to Kakuhihewa)* No one but the lord himself would speak first. *(From Kakuhihewa a jaundiced laugh)* Bid me welcome, neighbor.

KAKUHIHEWA

*(Rises)* Welcome. How did you find us?

KAWELO

So many lookouts. How could one miss you? *(Looks around. Men avert their features)* I seem to recognize visitors I entertained lately. *(Shivers)* But no, the thought is preposterous.

KAKUHIHEWA

And the purpose of your visit?

KAWELO

Just a neighborly call. I heard much about you.

## KAKUHIHEWA

You must be weary. A drink perhaps? *(Signals to thug, who proffers the brew. King signals. All exit, leaving Kawelo center with thug and king on either side. Kawelo raises the container to his lips. Sniffs.)*

## KAWELO

It smells a little heady, this awa. Drink is not a habit with me. Though, for this once! *(Raises cup towards the king then towards the thug. Takes a gulp. Thug nods to king. King nods to thug. Kawelo returns container. A light laugh)* It is getting to my head. *(Sits on stone. King and thug sit at his feet, intent. From under his cloak Kawelo whips out his adze. King and thug make as if to ward a blow. But Kawelo just cradles the adze over one arm)* My good adze. Idle too often, these days. *(Puts hand to eyes)* Strange. *(Closes his eyes, relaxes. Speaks as a medium does in a trance, looking at neither king nor thug)* That was a tasty draught. It relaxed me. That neighborly call, what was it about? O, yes. To ask the man to stop sending unbid-for visitors. Their coming, and their passing, break into my meditation. One could look forever at a tree. A whole day, a whole week, and yet there would be so much more to know. The roots at the base of the hala tree, they raise it up from the ground as a hero is acclaimed and carried shoulder-high. Branches branch from the trunk as arms gesture away from a torso. And what a treasure trove, the crotch. Aerial rootlets descend from the tree top straightway, as aerial godlings intent on mingling with earthly doings. With what humility too, ready to screw their tip under the soil, to exchange their own realm of air, drenched in space and color, for that dark underworld wherein only texture and tactile adventure may bind the blind. *(Kakuhihewa makes an impatient gesture. Thug, finger on lips, makes him desist)* And the birds in the trees. For them, no two branchlets alike. Each bird tries this twig and that, until it alights on one whose minute girth just fits the round ball of space under its curled toes. When that branch is found for which it was predestined, its goal is reached, its small victory won. It sits on it, its eyes closed. And sleeps content with, for its only contact with the outer world, the swaying of that one twiglet, grown to fit not the grasp of this little bird or that, but its very own.

*(Another irritated gesture from Kakuhiewa, stilled by warning finger from thug)* Feather cloaks we deem things of pride. Perchance should they not be marks of shame? Bird after bird was made to lose its tiny choice foothold upon the world. For the glory of a single feather cloak, uphill a desert of empty foliage, shorn of song, an unease latent in so many small twigs that shall never know the foothold of the one birdlet hatched to fit it.

KAKUHIHEWA

*(Very softly)* And the secret?

KAWELO

What beautiful secret! What powerful secret! One to reshape the world. Upset powers. Undo kings. Make the strong man weak and the weak man a lord. A secret that renders immortal the one who knows it. *(Raises adze, and again cradles it back on his arm)* Why should so fearful a secret alight on me? I know not. Kings, if they knew what power that secret holds, would beg of me, as hungry men for food, the secret of my secret.

KAKUHIHEWA

*(Ingratiatingly)* Tell the secret.

KAWELO

*(His eyes are still closed and he does not turn toward Kakuhiewa)* Could it be told in words, would it be a secret?

KAKUHIHEWA

*(Hushed insistence)* The secret stroke of the war club.

KAWELO

*(Light laugh)* O, that one. It is but a poor joke. It is nothing. No. I was speaking of the secret stroke of the adze. *(His trance tapers off. He wakes up. Looks at king and thug. Rises with a shy laugh)* I passed out. I told you that drink would go to my head. Well, it was a pleasant visit. I feel relaxed. *(Waves hand as he exits)* Goodbye, neighbors.

KAKUHIHEWA

*(Admiringly)* What a crafty one! What stealth! How he

carried that improvised deception. So well, that for a moment I forgot he was acting!

THUG

He was not acting.

KAKUHIHEWA

You are attempting to save face, master druggist. Your recipe failed you.

THUG

You say he was faking, O lord?

KAKUHIHEWA

You and I are not children any more. Neither is Kawelo. As we know, no man alive can be at peace within. Close your eyes, empty yourself of current schemes, and what have you? Inside a dark pit, hot lava ebbing, bubbling, and this vertigo to lean over the pit just a little too far. He was faking, faking peace within. He made a fool of both of us.

THUG

This brew, it is a sure thing. He told the truth, even though he left a few drops in the cup.

KAKUHIHEWA

Drink, then. I shall be the judge.

THUG

*(Abjectly. On his knees)* O master, O good lord, O god on earth, you already know my inner thoughts: loyalty, zeal, love, those are my sentiments.

KAKUHIHEWA

*(A command)* Drink.

*(Thug drinks. A pause. Passes hand over eyes. Rises. Snatches red cord off his shoulders, entwines it at both ends in his fists, snaps it to test its strength, goes toward the king, face contorted with hate. King rises in terror, flattens himself against the wall of the cave, one hand at his own*



*neck. Thug comes close, stops. Still holding the cord, his hands fall at his sides.)*

THUG

I passed out.

KAKUHIHEWA

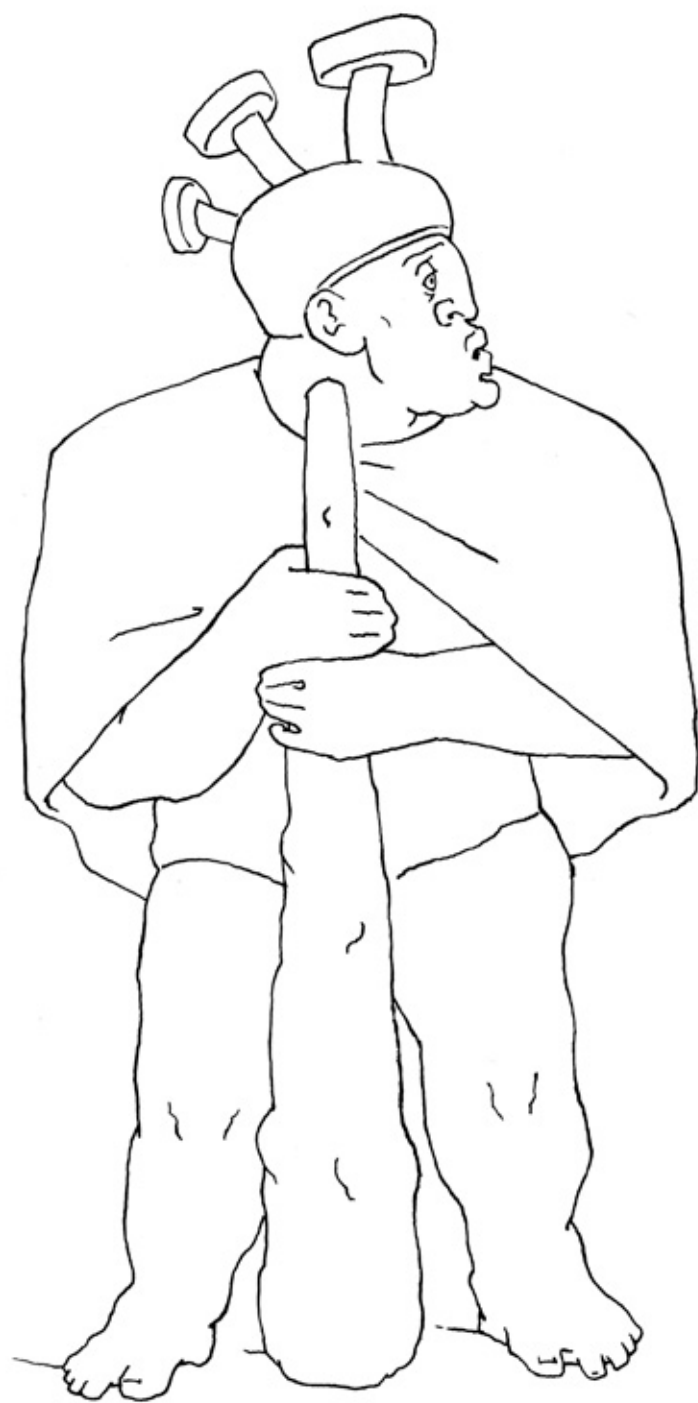
You are right. The drug works and Kawelo was not faking.

THUG

*(Looks at cord in his hands. Hangs it back over his shoulders)* Nothing happened that....

KAKUHIHEWA

Nothing unexpected. It proved my point. You are human. Not so this Kawelo, and I am more afraid of him than ever. The time for thrift is passed. With all my men and all my weapons I shall besiege his lair and destroy him!



## ACT TWO

*SCENE 3: A ledge half way up a cliff, overlooking a plain. Just before dusk. At one side one sees the top of a ladder, the one way of access from below, at the other side, the cliff wall.*

*A few kukui tree stumps, once struck by lightning. One of the stumps, about eight feet high, has been roughly carved in the semblance of a giant warrior. The cylinder of the trunk approximates a long cloak that hides the body and reaches to the ground. Its snug fit loosens just enough to let the hands emerge, holding vertically a seven foot war club. The hands are fingerless. The club is but a half-relief, and hugs close the matrix block. Rooted into the neckline of the cloak, the helmeted head, itself more wood than flesh, a wrathful cast to its stylized features. Topping the whole, a Roman-looking helmet with its gracefully curved crest. The make-believe warrior faces toward the plain, guardian-like.*

*Foreground, lying close to the statue, a log drum. Propped inside its cavity, Kalonaikaha'ila'au's war club.*

*Near the ladder, foreground, a bed of hot coals. On the side, a large calabash and small wooden dishes scattered around it.*

*As the scene opens, Kawelo, in his black tapa cloak, is noisily adzing at the base of the statue. Kalonaikaha'ila'au, in black feather cloak and helmet, is scooping out the log*

*drum with a stone knife. Kanewahineikiaoha, dressed in tapa, puts laulus on the coals. A conch shell hangs at her side.*

*In intervals between adze strokes, one hears off-stage martial noises rising from the plain below. Conch signals, drummings, the tramping of feet, and barked commands.*

#### KAWELO

*(Stops work. Listens)* Let's make as much noise as we can. That will keep the enemy guessing. *(To Kanewahineikiaoha)* Our lookouts must be hungry. Time for taps.

*(Kanewahineikiaoha stops work. She rises and blows her conch to the four horizons with as much flourish as the instrument allows.)*

#### KAWELO

*(To Kalonaikaha'ila'au)* Your turn.

*(Kalonaikaha'ila'au stops work and rattles his club to and fro inside the scooped-out log. Thunderous rattlings. Kawelo listens appreciatively.)*

#### KAWELO

Not quite in tune, yet. Father-in-law, whittle it a little thinner.

*(Both Kanewahineikiaoha and Kalonaikaha'ila'au go back to work.)*

#### KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

Light is failing.

*(Enter Kauahoa from cliff side. Black feather cape and helmet. War club in hand.)*

#### KAUAHOA

The plain is brown with people. They come by the forties,

by the four hundreds. From all districts. Each carrying his load of stones.

#### KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

If their champions fail, then a mass attack. Stones instead of clubs. Whichever way, we are done for. (*Kicks drum. Booming sound.*)

#### KAWELO

At last, well tuned.

*(Kauahoa sits down. Kanewahineikiaoha serves him. He eats. Enter Kamalama from plains side. Black malo and short black feather cape. No weapon.)*

#### KAMALAMA

Down there in the brush, champions. They raised their ladder to the lower ledge. From there to ours, a few steps!

*(Joins Kauahoa and Kanewahineikiaoha by the food. Kanewahineikiaoha serves him. Kamalama eats.)*

#### KAWELO

Nothing to stop them but what stories are told by those who returned. A gigantic guardian watches over our camp. They have seen him with their own eyes. (*Goes to statue, pats it affectionately*) Poor log. Poor Kawalaki'i. You were such a glorious stump before I had my way with you. We are pushed to the cliff wall by this Kakuhihewa like boars at bay! We lack tusks, but my adze is sharp enough!

#### KAUAHOA

*(Talks as he eats)* One night and two days of absolute quiet. Tonight, we can expect trouble. As dusk sets in, champions will rush our roost. I bet they'll keep their Hakaloa for the last. He is fearless, that Hakaloa. Even a giant like Kawalaki'i, were he alive, wouldn't faze him!

#### KAWELO

Aye, but Kawalaki'i is not alive. Thus harder to kill.

## KAUAHOA

Still, Hakaloa truly is a mean one. They call him "The bald one." I know not why, for he has a luxuriant growth of hair. Men who come back, maimed and mad, always mutter as they die, "The bald one."

## KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

*(A slight shriek)* Can't you say something nice. It gives me the shivers.

## KAWELO

*(To Kanewahineikioha)* Go sleep now. You haven't slept a wink for two days.

## KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

*(Rises)* Come, dear Kamalama. *(Both exit, cliff side.)*

*(His meal over, Kauahoa takes his watch by the ladder.)*

## KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

Could they sleep forever. Only grown-up men should live through tonight and tomorrow. *(To Kawelo)* Son, it's all very well to pretend that your wooden watchman is a fighter. But the moon rises late tonight, and in the dark one cannot see or fear your Kawalaki'i. Bump into it and it's only a log.

## KAWELO

Only too true, father-in-law. For moonless assaults, then what?

## KAUAHOA

*(At his watch)* One fellow just reached the lower ledge. I hear him tapping with his club like a blind man with a stick, to locate the foot of our ladder. It's even darker down there than here.

## KAWELO

You two, just stand at attention. And whatever happens, don't strike. Our foe, Kakuhihewa, should get a thrill from this fellow's report!

*(Kalonaiikaha'ila'au and Kauahoa stand at attention, and will not move throughout the following. Hands are seen grasping the uprights of the ladder. Up comes WALAHE'EIKIO. Quite a champion physically, and splendid in his red regalia. Feather cloak and helmet. War club. Secures his footing. Squints.)*

WALAHE'EIKIO

*(Booming voice)* How many of you rebels hide up here? Come out and fight! I am the great Walahe'eikio. *(Silence. Peers into the darkness. To himself)* Dark in there. Right for a spy, but wrong for a champion. Not that I mind the dark. *(Less assured)* Anybody in there?

KAWELO

*(Soft tremolo)* Are you dead too?

WALAHE'EIKIO

*(Jumps)* What was that!

KAWELO

*(Gently)* I said: are you dead too? If so, welcome. We like it here, all of us, veterans of past battles. Or, rather, of battles of the past. Of past centuries, I should say. As a new dead, you must be fretful. They all are. But after one thousand years, one realizes that twenty, thirty years, subtracted or added to a life, don't make that much of a difference. Do you smell the sweetish smell of the leis we wear? *Maile* leaves plucked from that nether world of Milu, where, not quite alive and not wholly dead, we dehydrate gently. Drop by drop drip what once were our life juices. Mixed with the perfume of our leis, do you detect another aroma, more stale than pungent, perhaps a stench in the nostrils of the living? *(Kawelo steps forward suddenly. His arms open wide, holding the corners of his tapa cloak that expand like wings)* Welcome, freshman! Come! Dehydrate with us!

*(A shriek, and Walahe'eikio, dropping his club, dives headlong between the uprights of the ladder. Off-stage noise of body, ricocheting from tree to rock to tree.)*

KAWELO

That was easy. (*Kauahoa goes to club left by Walahe'eikio. Picks it up.*)

KAUAHOA

Now I'll have a spare. I'll need it. (*Kauahoa goes back to his watch by the ladder.*)

KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

When this so-called king musters his armies, he musters them. Two thousand men against our handful. And even so, he thinks that I am dead, and that Kauahoa is dead, both of us at your hands, valorous son-in-law.

KAWELO

His stakes are high. Many of his subjects hate him. They dream of a return to the old days when your dynasty reigned, when black was the color of the royal cloak, when injustice to the poor was unheard of. A revolt is brewing.

KAUAHOA

(*At his watch*) Ssh....

KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

(*Authority in his voice*) This one shall be mine. Kawelo, Kauahoa, go get your rest and leave him to me.

KAUAHOA

Glad to.

KAWELO

Call us if need be. (*Both exit, cliff side.*)

(*Kalonaikaha'ila'au stands at watchful attention back of the statue, hardly distinguishable from it. Hands at top of the ladder, HAKALOA enters. A big fellow, dressed in red feathers. A longer cloak than Walahe'eikio's, symbol of his higher rank. A knotted club. No helmet. A hirsute beard and head of hair. One can hardly see his features for the hair. Bearlike he crouches,*



*peering into the dark. A ray of moonlight lights the calabash and trays.)*

# HAKALOA

Food. Food. They scampered like rats. I don't blame them. I am so tough at times I frighten myself. *(Sits by calabash. Using one of the dishes to scoop with, attacks its contents)* It works both ways. Gives me strength and starves them, or soon will, if I don't kill them all before. *(Much munching. As he nears the bottom of the calabash, drops the tray and digs in with his forearms, head down. Munching sounds. The food gone, he straightens himself, dries his hands and forearms on his cloak, wipes his mouth with it. A last licking. A last smacking of lips)* Now, twenty men wouldn't faze me. I am strong. *(Sliding, the ray of moonlight reveals the wooden Kawalaki'i. Hakaloa rises, sees it)* Say, I was not alone. *(Addresses it)* Taller than I, by a foot or two I'd guess. Say, that makes you a giant, like in the tales of old. I think I'll like that, killing a giant. Those midgets, one swats them like flies. Still, I wonder if my club ever could reach the tiptop of your helmet. Oh well, the life of a man isn't all in his head. You don't talk much, do you? Strong, silent, and all that. It goes with your size. What's your name? You won't say? Mystery warrior, eh? Going it alone, eh? Well, this is your last chance to pay obeisance to my master. I am the king's champion. *(Chants. Makes gestures as theatrical as those of Kalonaikaha'ila'au, but coarser)*

I, King Kakuhihewa's champion,  
Order you to beg his mercy!  
Rebellion chokes the rebel!  
Does the sardine bite the shark?  
Mangy dog attack wild boar?  
Swine turn against swineherd?  
Baitworm devour the eel?  
Should the plover shake at a shake of its own tail?

# KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

No, indeed!

HAKALOA

So you can talk. You agree with me. To your knees!

KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

I agree with you. This so-called king, Kakuhihewa, is a fake.

HAKALOA

You mumble. Open your mouth, man. Speak clearly!

KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

*(Enunciated carefully)* Your Kakuhihewa is a rebel!

HAKALOA

Huh! I call that a taunt. Short but sure. It makes me mad!  
*(Chants)*

War is relaxing as a bath!  
Hakaloa's innards grow strong  
On a fare of spear points.  
His spear shuttles in his hand.  
It skewers cliff to cliff  
Stringing a giant lei!  
File your tusks. Grit your teeth.  
My club strikes. Count the strikes.  
Your knees wobble. Down you go.  
To knock out your teeth scores twice.  
To shave off your scalp, thrice.  
The war over, pick up the remains.  
My knees bend under the weight of the spoils!

KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

*(Chants, unseen by Hakaloa, without gestures)*

My war club kills at one blow.  
Shame, should I strike twice.  
Newcomer to the nether world,  
Dead Hakaloa could indeed boast  
Two blows were struck to speed him there.  
Ghosts would laugh! I would lose face!

HAKALOA

I don't like that. *(Puts his club down)* Wait a minute. I for-

got my helmet. *(Goes to food calabash. Takes it with both hands at the rim, turns it upside down, crowns himself with it. It looks like a shiny monstrous pate. Picks up club. Violently, as a war whoop)* Wet your tapa! Here comes Baldy! *(Charges the statue head first, holding his club with both hands before him. Loud thud of impact as he collides with the statue, falls down. Shakes head. Gets up. Quickly backs away. Cautiously describes a quarter circle around the statue, jabbing with club as he goes, then strikes. Thud of wood against wood)* Good man! *(Reverses his tracks, again jabbing before he strikes. Thud of wood against wood)* Good man! *(A pause. Walks to statue, pats it)* All wood! *(Uncontrolled laughter)* That's a good one. A decoy, that's all it is! *(Leans on statue, still shaking with laughter. Suddenly stiffens, backs away, alert again)* I forgot. The voice! *(Kalonaikaha'ila'au detaches himself from behind statue, stands by it as a slightly smaller replica)* You are the voice!

*(Kalonaikaha'ila'au merges back into darkness. Hakaloa circles around the statue, club held at the ready, looking all ways. Another circling. When Hakaloa is behind the statue, a thud, a gurgle, and he reappears stumbling blindly, the calabash-helmet over his head down to his shoulders. Kalonaikaha'ila'au comes into the open. Watches as Hakaloa, with both hands, attempts in vain to wrench his head out of the calabash. Hakaloa falls to the ground, still trying, knocks himself against the log drum, with resulting sound effects. Gives up. Gurgles. Puts hand out, groping for help. Kalonaikaha'ila'au gently takes his hand, helps him to the ladder. More gurgles. Hakaloa exits down ladder. Kalonaikaha'ila'au picks up the club Hakaloa left behind.)*

#### KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

Kawelo should appreciate my tact. A sissy, my son-in-law. I seem to be taking after him. *(Yawns)* Hakaloa will never admit his opponent was made of wood. Another tall story shall make the rounds. Nothing to do until morning. I to sleep. *(Makes himself comfortable against the log drum,*

*both his club and Hakaloa's hugged to his breast. Soon snores. Enter from cliff side Kawelo, on tiptoe, adze in hand. Looks at Kalonaikaha'ila'au.)*

KAWELO

Two war clubs, one a gift from our latest visitor, or perhaps not freely given. Strife, strife, strife. Tomorrow, at dawn I suppose, mass assault, stoning to death, et cetera. It is all too silly. With so much of worth to achieve, and so little time to do so. *(Goes to ladder. One foot on rung, carefully lays down his adze at the edge of the rim)* When wife sees it, she'll understand. I am going to have a talk with this Kakuhihewa, and make him see my point of view. *(Exits down ladder.)*





## ACT TWO

SCENE 4: *King Kakuhikewa's temple court.*

*It is planted with stick-gods at diverse slants and of varied heights. Center, a low sacrificial platform cushioned with palm fronds. On it lies Kawelo, seemingly lifeless, the strangling cord still at his neck.*

*Leaning against one side of the platform, Kanewahineikiaoha and Kamalama. They huddle together, the boy's head on his sister's lap. He sleeps, hugging Kawelo's adze. She leans over the altar table, head hid between her arms, oblivious to all but sorrow.*

*Standing alone at the other side of the altar, Kakuhikewa looks at Kawelo.*

*Back of the altar, the two soothsayers. Foreground, courtiers. Among them, the politician, the thug, and Hakaloa and Walahe'eikio in red cloaks and helmets, and armed with spears.*

*The soothsayers lay over Kawelo banana leaves, then with a leaf-whisk sprinkle water over the altar out of a small calabash. Chant, alternating voices as they do so.*

SOOTHSAYER 1

SOOTHSAYER 2

*(High range, quick tempo)*

*Nukunuku manu e!*

*Mau maka manu e!*

*O ka lepe manu e!*

*O ke kino manu e!*

*O ka hulu manu e!*

*Ua lele manu e!*

*(Low range, slow tempo)*

*Ua pa manu e!*

*Ua make manu e!*

*Ua moa manu e!*

*E ai manu e!*

*(Ceremony over, soothsayers stand back of altar.)*

#### KAKUHIHEWA

*(To himself)* Rid of him. Rid of him. Rid of him. The cheek of him. Coming to me alone and unarmed. To show me the error of my ways! Could I waste more time hearing about the birds and the trees, and mourning for the twiglets bare of chirps! That day at the cave, the mush he regurgitated. Since then, I look my servants in the eye to see inside what gives! No joy there, no peace, no light. No more light than oozes from the glow of that same lava pit that smoulders inside me! To think a man would dare keep in himself, to himself, so much light and so much peace! This time, he was put to death immediately. And then the female with the boy, come asking for news of their Kawelo! I brought them to him myself! Two last rootlets to keep alive an antique dynastic tree. It shall be uprooted! When big strong men, like Walahe'eikio, like Hakaloa, come back beaten and mouthing stories of ghosts and giants, I begin to wonder. Magicians of old, it is said, did come back to life. *(Threatening gesture toward Kawelo)* But not in our day! He is dead. The trees inside him shall rot; the birds that roost there chirp no more! *(To thug)* You are absolutely certain? Your job was final!

#### THUG

Poison and strangling, O lord! What more should be needed!

#### KAKUHIHEWA

*(Walks back to courtiers. To politician)* My spies report unrest. Your advice?



## POLITICIAN

So many come from so many districts with stones in their hands. Unpolitical.

## KAKUHIHEWA

(*To Hakaloa*) Countermand the levy of men and stones!

## HAKALOA

Lord, the kingdom is alerted. From as far as Kawaihapai they come. To halt them in their tracks could breed confusion.

## KAKUHIHEWA

Very well. Let them gather. Then disband them! (*To soothsayers*) The campaign over, we'll have the liturgy. 'Til then, for the victim and prisoners, I'll hold you responsible! (*Exit king with courtiers.*)

*(Soothsayers go to Kanewahineikiaoha and Kama-lama. Both are asleep now. A gesture of pity. They busy themselves rearranging leaves on the altar.)*

## SOOTHSAYER 1

What sudden splurge on the part of our lord! Up to now, on the altar, more often than not, blighted breadfruit, sick dogs, and pig-bananas.

## SOOTHSAYER 2

Man is the noblest sacrifice, but not at all a savory. Would the gods inspire our lord to present them, and us, with suckling pigs and forced puppies.

## SOOTHSAYER 1

This Kawelo, I wonder what turned our lord against him? It is rumored his strength was all in the stroke of his adze. Had he shaved off our lord's nose with it, the royal spite could hardly be stronger.

## SOOTHSAYER 2

And that royal thug, how he twisted that cord at Kawelo's

neck, and twined it, and again twisted it! He seemed more like a raging dragon than the human brute he is.

*(Enter thug on tiptoe.)*

THUG

I hardly meant to overhear, friends. What you think of me matters not. But the tune of your chant seems unfriendly to our master. Should he hear of it, chance is that this Kawelo would not lie alone. Tomorrow, the gods would be surfeited. What could be more to the taste of a god than his familiars?

SOOTHSAYER 1

*(Frantic humility)* Noble thug, you know our sentiments: zeal, awe, and love toward our lord!

SOOTHSAYER 2

And toward you, noble executioner, awe, zeal, and love!

THUG

No mention then. But go! A secret mission brings me here that brooks no witnesses.

*(Exit soothsayers. During the following soliloquy Kalonaikaha'ila'au and Kauahoa enter unobtrusively. Black feather cloaks and war clubs. Take their stand back of altar. Kanewahineikiaoha awakes without overt movement. Soon after Kama-lama awakes. All four watch silently. Thug goes to altar. Unties the cord at Kawelo's neck. Drags his fingers lightly over Kawelo's throat.)*

THUG

No bruises. Quite a show I put on. Perhaps I overdid it. *(Puts hand on Kawelo's heart)* Said our lord: the trees in him shall rot; the chirps cease. Perhaps not. Herbs have secrets. Some kill. Some turn life into only a semblance of death. *(Touches Kawelo's lids)* When his lids closed, was it still noon inside? *(Curt laugh)* The enormous risk I take, could it be for the sake of his birds and his trees? No! I am no nature lover. But I have eyes trained to spot

small shadows cast by what as yet is not! *(As Kawelo stirs, thug takes a step back. Kawelo shoves aside the banana leaves, sits at edge of altar, shakes head to clear it.)*

KAWELO

*(To thug)* Another draught of your relaxing potion, master druggist? *(Notices stick-gods)* Only this time it would seem you did me a good turn! To be good, does it hurt inside?

THUG

Not truly a good deed, Kawelo. I have a most political nose. And know there is less reward in serving a dead lord than a live one. *(Puts knee to ground)* I am your servant, King Kawelo! *(Kawelo misses that last. He is admiring the stick-gods.)*

KAWELO

*(To himself)* Well-seasoned logs. These ancient craftsmen, they never had the adze. All they had to work with was a stone knife! *(To thug)* What was that you just said, "King Kawelo"? Rather flesh meat in the maw of the gods!

THUG

*(Humbly)* I am no seer, Kawelo. Please remember I was first to call you "king."

*(Thug retires back of altar. The four others come to life. Kamalama runs to Kawelo, gives him his adze.)*

KAWELO

Thank you, little brother.

*(Kamalama runs to investigate the stick-gods.)*

KAWELO

And you, wife? Nothing for me!

*(Kanewahineikiaoha rushes to him and hugs him. Kalonaikaha'ila'au and Kauahoa close in from the sides.)*

#### KAWELO

The clan is gathering.

*(Off-stage sounds of mob action. Conch calls suddenly muffled. Shouts, screams. Tramping. They rise to a crescendo, then erupt on stage as Kakuhihewa stumbles in at a run. He collapses center foreground, arms over his head for protection. Hot on his trail, from both sides, the vanguard of the mob enters, nondescript, disorderly, arms raised, waving stones in their hands. Roughly pushed on stage, Hakaloa and Walahe'eikio enter, hands tied at their back, disarmed.)*

#### ON- AND OFF-STAGE VOICES

Down with red! Up with black!

*(Kalonaikaha'ila'au and Kauahoa, each at one side, stop the onrush with their impassive stand, feet firmly planted, clubs held horizontally. The mob stops. Raised arms are lowered, but with stones held at the ready. Thug sneaks behind Kakuhihewa, red cord in hand.)*

#### VOICES

Death to the red. Death to Kakuhihewa!

#### KAKUHIHEWA

*(A wail) Asylum! I claim asylum! (Sensing a lull, raises head. Sees Kawelo, Kalonaikaha'ila'au, and Kauahoa. A wail) The dead live! The dead live! (Thoroughly frightened, crawls to altar, hugs it.)*

#### KAWELO

*(To people) People, remember, since ever, this temple, this altar, are places of refuge. Kakuhihewa asks for the*

gods to pass judgment. Before the gods take a hand, the red king perhaps shall acknowledge that the black dynasty is the lawful one.

*(Vigorous acquiescence from Kakuhihewa, still clinging to altar. People lay down their stones.)*

KAWELO

My beloved father-in-law, the great champion, Kalona-ikaha'ila'au is the rightful head of the black dynasty.

KALONAIKAHA'ILA'AU

*(Stage whisper)* Son, I don't want to be king. I am too old for that, son. *(Pats club)* All we want is peaceful needle-work among our mementos and our memories. *(Loudly)* Daughter is the rightful heir to the kingdom.

KANEWAHINEIKIAOHA

I pledge both myself and the kingdom to my lord, Kawelo. *(Hugs him.)*

PEOPLE

Long live King Kawelo!

*(Started on stage, the hails are reverberated diminuendo to great distance. All kneel before Kawelo. A gesture. All rise, except the two red champions and Kakuhihewa.)*

KAWELO

*(To Kakuhihewa)* Your hands! *(Kakuhihewa presents his hands held together, palms down, ready to be tied. Thug helpfully offers his cord. Kawelo takes Kakuhihewa's hands in his, turns them palms up)* Your hands are strong, Kakuhihewa. Strong idle hands. Do you enjoy farming? *(No reaction)* Of course you do. You shall be a farmer. I'll give you good enough land down by Ka'ena Point. Also a fine beach, with its crop of *opihi*. And to speed you on your new career, I, the king, shall adze a planting stick for you. *(Exit Kakuhihewa, backing away. To thug)* Good thug, you

took a chance. With Kawelo a king there is no need for a royal assassin. Your reasons for tossing away your job may not be those you acknowledge. Perhaps you are a nature lover. You took a chance. I'll take one. I appoint you my personal physician. Of course, suspicion would be quick to rise should I fail to remain in good health. *(Exit thug, backing away. To Kauahoa)* Gather the red champions and have them measured for a fit of black cloaks. *(Exit Kauahoa with Hakaloa and Walahe'eikio. To mob, now pacified)* Go back to your farms and your fishing grounds, people. It is far from easy to be a good king, but oh! how hard I shall try! To be king is not only to be king over men, people, but to hold in trust that which ties us together, beyond bonds of blood and man-made laws. This kingdom, this earth of ours, it was here, as beautiful as now, long before the first ones among our ancestors beached on its sands their canoes. To be a just king toward men is not enough. What lasting good would a just king do who defaced and scattered this antique heritage to which man is but a new-comer. My pledge: *(All but Kawelo put a knee to ground. Chanting softly)*

Hear me, skies! Earth, hear me!  
 You, mountains and seas!  
 O toilers, O farmers, my pledge to you all!  
 And to you, soil, first of all!  
 All things and all people our fathers  
 Dearly loved and dearly suffered for!

*(All others take up the chant, sotto voce, both on stage and off stage. Sound tapers off into the distance, suggesting an unseen multitude.)*

#### PEOPLE

All things and all people our fathers  
 Dearly loved and dearly suffered for!

*(The people rise and exit, backing away, leaving on stage family group--Kawelo, Kanewahineiki-aoha, Kalonaikaha'ila'au and Kamalama.)*

KAWELO

*(Stroking the handle of his adze)* Dear adze, I am a foolish man, even though I mean well. Now that I am king, there shall be even less time left to do the things you and I alone can do!

For Martin

## II U'i a U'i

Beauty Meets Beauty

( I would very much like to  
keep title as is =

caps = U'i A U'i -

Smaller type = Beauty meets Beauty  
(an ~~explanation~~ <sup>weak approximation of</sup>  
the Hawaiian title - )





Volcano portion of circular set.  
red light, from under-  
neath. Smoke on tip  
of cone

~~Long Ram take~~  
suggested cast | ~~Soo Young~~ = PELE  
his girl = Richard  
Drake Jr.

## PROLOGUE

Soo Young.

*The inside of an active lava pit.*

*Its walls are black, its slopes steep. At the back rough-hewn steps should permit a diagonal ascent. The stage floor represents the surface of the red-hot lake of lava that half fills the pit. Its ruby glow lights the actors directly from underneath.*

*Looking up, one sees the lip of the crater, silhouetted as a crescent-shaped outline against a fiery-red sky. From the hot surface of the lava lake rise gray wisps of vapor.*

*At right, kneeling directly on the lava, is an old woman in a wine-colored wrap, ragged and burnt brown in places. Around her throat a scarlet scarf is loosely knotted. Her hair is disorderly. With a tapa stick she beats red tapa cloth over a tapa board. It is PELE, goddess of volcanoes.*

*To the left are three young women, good to look at. The three are dressed in identical orange-red wraps, less ragged than that of Pele though showing traces of burns. Their hair is the color of red walnut. On their heads are crowns made of interlaced ohelo twigs, with tiny leaves and yellow berries. Gracefully squatting on the lava floor, the girls are busy stringing leis of ohelo. They are the younger sisters of Pele. The one that concerns us most is HI'IAKA.*

*They chant gaily as they work. Starting softly, the chant*

soon acquires volume and momentum. A clapping of hands underlines the rustic rhythm, not unlike that of a square-dance tune.

## SISTERS

Ho'okomo a'e i loko  
 A mau na pu'u  
 E 'ola'ola nei.  
 E kulipe'e nui! E 'ai-honua!  
 E Pele! E Pele!  
 Hua'ina. Hua'ina.  
 Ku 'ia ka lani!  
 Pae ka uwila!  
 E kulipe'e nui! E Pele!

*(Pele cuts her sisters short with an impatient burst of stick beats that sounds like a roll of drums. Her voice is full-throated.)*

## PELE

Shut up, sisters! What idle heads you have! Most of your time is passed in contemplating your beauty. Tcha! Your hair this way one day, that way the next. Today, leis on your heads. Tomorrow they'll be at your necks. You'll hang leis from your noses one of these days. Such silly craving for novelties. Tcha! *(Authoritative beat of tapa stick on board)* Look at me. I am a woman too. Well, as much of a woman as you ever will be. Do I primp my hair, shampoo it with the sap of crushed ginger stalks? Or powder it with the pollen of hala blossoms? Not me. I am a good woman, sisters. Well, maybe rather a seasoned goddess.

*(The three sisters giggle. Pele raps for order.)*

## PELE

By now, you should know that all that primping is in vain. Should a human feel bold enough to embrace one of you, he would burn to a crisp on the spot. If not, I would see to it that he did later! Tcha!

I am the jealous one, sisters. You fancy yourselves better looking than I am. True, men who look me in the eye blanch

with fear rather than blush with passion. What of it! That is my job: to adze these puny humans down to size. To make them conscious and wary of the power of the gods. They learn fast, too. *(Now she underlines each fact with a beat of stick on board)* A lava flow over their taro crops! *(Beat)* A geyser of flames at the heart of a breadfruit grove! *(Beat)* A hail of rocks over a chief's domain! *(Beat)* ...and man becomes very polite indeed. Why just to shuffle the earth's crust a mite... *(Beat)* ...and let them take a peek at the innards of my oven... *(Beat)* ...and they like me fine, these humans. Well, at least they say so. Tcha!

[ Where men are concerned we are better off than most gods. ] Not for us their temples made of sticks and stones! A volcano is our home. Other gods have to wait for the days when sacrifices may be auspiciously performed. Not us. I can roast right here at home anything and anyone I fancy! *(Sighs)* Fear is all very well, indeed. Still a little love--love unasked for--that is nice too. As the highland traveler gingerly throws into my lava pit his twig of ohelo berries, perhaps it is more than a polite gesture. ] Maybe a little tenderness gets mixed with his cautious offering. Some sort of a loving feeling for the tough grandmother who scolds, and scours, and scalds. Maybe humans have understood at last that it is for love that I punish. Were it for spite, they'd all be incinerated! *(Muffled drumming of stick on board. Then reflectively)* Tcha!

*(Even before the goddess has stopped speaking, a shape begins to rise over the edge of the lava pit, silhouetted in black against the red sky. Seemingly a warrior of splendid physique, armed with a spear, a long black feather cloak thrown over his shoulders, and a black feather helmet on his head. A lei palaoa, or whale-tooth necklace, hangs at his throat. His handsome face glows unnaturally with a metallic sheen close to copper or red-gold. The shape rises vertically, as does a ship over the horizon, and freezes in a martial stance. It is the god of air, KAMAPUA'A, who orders the winds, the rains and the rainbows, the clouds. His name means "Born-a-hog.")*

*(The three younger sisters strain their necks the better to look at him. Two of them merely slacken the pace of their work, but Hi'iaka, entranced, drops her leis and raises both hands in a gesture of admiration. Sensing what goes on, but refusing to look at the intruder, Pele hunches over her tapa board doggedly.)*

HI'IAKA

O grouchy! O grumpy sister! Look! This one hasn't burned to a crisp. How could he reach us, walking over miles of red-hot lava? He looks healthy enough after that walk. Such shoulders! Such thighs! What chiefly bearing!

*(Her two young sisters giggle.)*

PELE

Hi'iaka, one of these days your bird brain will make you say and do things you'll regret. That is no man, my dove. That is a pig! *hog*

HI'IAKA

To me he looks like a splendid specimen of a man!

PELE *hog*

It is a pig. And be careful you don't rub your nose against his snout, or dire things will happen! Kiss him and you'll regret it, my dove. A man indeed! T'is a pig!

*(Behind the god, high in the sky changeling clouds appear, kept in constant motion as if to transmit in code a portentous message. The sky itself pales from red to pink, then turns to tender blue. Immobile, Kamapua'a is etched in darkness against the new sky. As he starts talking, something he does without gestures, his voice is well-bred and manly, but when he grunts it is the grunt of a hog.)*

KAMAPUA'A

*(Grunt)* Hello, red-eyed witch! Hello, knock-kneed crone! Such language! Don't let the young ones hear you.

PELE

(Her back to Kamapua'a. Mumbling, strangely mollified) I didn't say anything wrong. All I said was you are a pig. A ~~pig~~ <sup>hog</sup> you are. <sup>hog</sup>

KAMAPUA'A

(Grunt) Jealous as ever! Just because our affair didn't last. You bit me too hard! (Succession of grunts that could be taken for belly laughs) The smoke gets in your eyes, Red Eyes. Look at me. Do I look like a pig? And if I am a pig as you say, then why don't you cook me? (Grunt.)

PELE

<sup>you are</sup>  
(Her back obstinately turned) You know I can't. I tried. Anyhow ~~pigs~~ no good, raw or cooked. (Sniffles) One does have a right to tell one's own sister what kind of a fellow it is that makes her young eyes pop. She'll strain a bone in her neck if she stretches it that far. And for what, tcha! To sneak a look at a hog!

KAMAPUA'A

Goddess, you and I made love and made war. Bygones be bygones now. (Points to Hi'iaka.) For a peace offering, give me Hi'iaka.

(Pele turns around a little, acknowledging his presence.)

PELE

It won't work. You'll take her away from all this coziness into your high regions. What with the fresh air, the cool winds, and that silly school of trained clouds with bellies filled with rain water, spouting it on earth to make things grow! She'll sicken. <sup>their</sup>

KAMAPUA'A

Let her have her say.

(Hi'iaka stands up entranced, impatient to join her beloved.)

PELE

Tcha! Suppose there is a child. With both your strains at odds, it would be denied godhood. It would be conceived a human, born to die.

~~mortal~~

KAMAPUA'A

If born a female, I'll give her beauty.

PELE

Then men who desire her shall die. Wars will be fought over her.

KAMAPUA'A

*prophecies*  
 Hurry, goddess, your vaticinations. We still have a long journey to reach the tiptop of my heavens. A blessing?

PELE

(Reluctantly) Name the child Kamalalawalu. That may allay the curse. (To Hi'iaka) Go.

*(Hi'iaka springs up the rocky steps into the arms of Kamapua'a. They turn and descend, gradually lost from sight behind the crater's edge. As they go, Hi'iaka's two young sisters look at them longingly.)*

PELE

Back to your work, sisters.

*(Sisters giggle. Go back to work.)*







Grandmother = ~~Eni~~ Eni  
owl voice = Noelani Mahoe  
Lani Ramanah  
Lanihi: Noelani Mahoe

Set 2 Probably left of stage.  
[ Canoe of fisherman Act I Sc 3  
would be right of stage ]

Halemano - suggest = Enock Koina  
if available,

## ACT ONE

or James I. Tablan

of Molokai

SCENE 1: A rather large hut, its walls of dried leaf plaited over a scaffolding of rough-hewn posts lashed together with cords. Calabashes held in nets hang from the ridgepole. Others are displayed on shelves. Rolled mats are propped up at corners.

sew  
dmg  
Act I sc 3  
of Ns'zua

HALEMANO, a comely adolescent, lies on a mat, center stage, stiff in death. A very old woman wails over him, scattering her hair between raised hands. She is Halemano's grandmother, KAUKAALI'I. What wisdom pertains to great age injects a sort of peacefulness that underlies her display of sorrow.

### KAUKAALI'I

Auwe! Halemano, grandson whom I pulled with my own hands out of your dying mother! Halemano, whose umbilical cord I severed on the spot with what teeth were left me, auwe!

How light you felt, curled inside my joined palms as if they were a second womb! I washed you, precious packet of flesh. I wrapped you for warmth inside my shawl. For months you hung limp at my back as I went about my everyday chores. In sleep, you swung there at the cadence of my tapa stick beating bark ~~to a pulp and thinning it~~ into garments. For a while you needed no garment. Indoors, as would a piglet, you nosed your way on all fours among calabashes and trays. Outdoors, you wallowed in the silt of the wet taro fields. How you bawled one whole morning, lost from sight under a huge leaf!

[ ]

One glorious day at last you straightened yourself up on short legs, crooked like those of a wooden god. From then on, how swiftly you grew, and how tall. How adept at games and sports. Auwe!

Why ever should such a weakness gnaw at your young inwards that it baffled the wisest healers? ~~[Even my herb potions failed you.]~~ Halemano, you started life, as we all do, with opaque eyes turned unseeing toward an unknown world. As we do not, months before the end, your sleep-heavy eyelids denied the known world to your eyeballs. Refusing sight, refusing taste even, our Halemano laid himself on this mat, and turned his back on it all. Auwe! Why the sudden haste to depart? To go on what journey, immobile traveler? Or did you see with eyes closed sights that surpassed what open eyes may see? Auwe!

*(Enter LAENIHI, older sister of Halemano, in dun-colored garments, black hair loose. She holds a long stick with a calabash net-bundle lashed to its top. The stick suggests a pilgrim's staff. Long strides until she reaches the mat. Looks at her brother in silence. Then speaks.)*

#### LAENIHI

I heard of it the moment brother died. My spirit friends broke the news. *(Looks up and around, acknowledging unseen presences)* My wind-friends, my cloud-friends, my bird-friends. Owl makes a trustful eyewitness where things happen in the thick of night. *(Circles Halemano's body. Examines it as a doctor would a patient)* It was on his account that I left on that far journey: bent on finding him a wife. Idle mission, indeed, even if ~~he~~ had lived. Had I brought back with me, as I meant to do, a woman most perfect in body, of intellect unsurpassed, brother would not have spared a look for her. *(Straightens up. Gives her diagnosis smilingly)* Brother died of love.

#### KAUKAALI'I

For whom? Surely not his grandmother! Halemano shied away from girls. His splendid body did not go unnoticed.

[~~His rich taro lands were added bait.~~] They tried hard, the girls--with dance and song, with gifts of flower leis and of fish. Some sprinkled him with the ~~intoxicating~~ pollen of hala blossoms. All in vain. Never once did he fail to come home to me. Long before the end, lonely sleep replaced sports for him. It had become his one craving.

# LAENIHI

Nevertheless brother died of love. A lucky thing, too, that he did. As our witch saying has it, "He who dies ~~in love~~ dies in good health." [~~Had brother been mortally wounded in battle, had he been mangled by a shark at sea, I doubt my small powers would have sufficed.~~] Those who die of love, ~~their body remains strong and unmarred.~~ Brother will obey the call. *(She kneels by the shoulders of Halemano, mouth to mouth with him, and blows her breath into him. Then she signals to grandmother impatiently)* Granny, Kaukaali'i! Do not stay idle while I work! The boy will need food. It took him all of his strength to die. That should make him hungry.

*(Kaukaali'i nods her understanding, exits. She will return with a bunch of taro leaves. As a background to the foreground action she rubs fire-sticks, mashes the leaves with a stone pestle, mixes and stirs a brew in a calabash.)*

*(Head turned upward, scanning the air, Laenihi chants, mostly on a very high note, suggestive of a bird call.)*

# LAENIHI

Pueo - e, pueo - e.

Pueo e pili i ka ua.

Pueo kanikani i ka ua.

E - pueo! E - pueo!

*(The hooting of an unseen owl answers the call. Laenihi nods approval. Soft chanting now, bending close to Halemano's ear.)*

## LAENIHI

Eia i Keolewa i ka ihu o ka wa'a.

Make ka ua i ka makani.

Make ke kai ko'o i ke kai pi'i.

Holo maila i ka moana.

turn nose of the canoe  
skilled the rain and wind  
" the rough sea, choppy sea  
sail smooth the ocean

(Speaking softly, she massages the body with light deft fingers) Turn the nose of your canoe, brother. Brother, turn back. Remember, we were hardly a man and woman then, two children playing on the beach. The sand crab, how swiftly it dug its hole in the wet sand. You ran after the rock crab. It stood up, fearless, facing you, its hind legs firmly propped on hard sand. How shy, you remember, brother, the soft-shell crab hiding its shame between cracks in the rock, hardly daring to peek at us. How we swam, brother, side by side in our nakedness, with the same strokes and same twists as would twin porpoises. Braver than I, you dove straight for the caves where spiny lobsters and toothy eels are quick to teach a lesson to budding fishermen. I cured your bites. Once we were lost among a school of tuna, their blue backs a sea bluer and swifter than the blue sea itself. The kiss you attempted, my lad, to the snout of the humuhumu-nukunuku-a-pua'a. Your first kiss, and you swore then that it would be your last. Not so easily shed, those days of a past that is and forever shall be. ~~Even though you wish hard for what as yet is not.~~ Turn the nose of your canoe, little brother. Come back! (Mouth to mouth, she blows breath into Halemano. Chants as her massaging gestures slow down and soon taper off entirely.)

'Ohiki 'eli i kona lua.

'A'ama holo i ka malo'o.

Paeia noho i ka mawae.

O na wa kamali'i - e!

He mea e ka pili - e!

sand crab digs his hole  
rock crab walks on dry sand  
soft-shell crab hidden in cracks of rock  
5 days of our youth  
how they cling to one!

(Again the hoot of an owl is heard. Laenihī is quite still now. Halemano stirs. His eyes open. Half raises himself, at first on an elbow. Acts dazed.)

## LAENIHI

Hello, brother. Did you sleep well?

the sand crab digs his hole  
the rock crab walks on dry sand  
The soft shell crab hidden in the cracks of rock  
5 days of our youth!  
How one clings to them!

HALEMANO

Sister, hello. Indeed, soundly. Strangely so, as if the rhythm of my sleeping had freed itself from the rhythm of my breathing.

LAENIHI *(after a pause)*

~~[I know what you mean. You slept in depth.]~~ You traveled far, didn't you? [ 3

HALEMANO

How did you know? I was in a forest. Black rocks, glossy with wet moss, crooked bone-white trunks and giant ferns. Unlike anything at home.

LAENIHI

And the girl?

HALEMANO

How did you know? More a goddess than a girl. Gladly would one die to be with her.

LAENIHI

You did, brother. You did. Tell me about her. Don't tell me she is beautiful, that there is no blemish whatsoever about her, that she is glorious beyond compare, surpassing all others as the top of Haleakala ringed with clouds in lonely splendor.

HALEMANO

Just so. How did you know?

LAENIHI

Simple. Focus rather on more homely details. What kind of skirt did she wear?

HALEMANO

Its tapa was perfumed with the scent of four hundred flowers. Its texture was so thin as to be almost translucent. It was double-dyed a deep purple.

LAENIHI

Her hair?

HALEMANO

Straight and black--a black so glossy as to almost be called a red.

LAENIHI

Her leis?

HALEMANO

Braided of lehua blossoms mixed with the yellow-green fruit of the pandanus tree. Ha! How truthful--symbols of hope mingled with symbols of sorrow.

LAENIHI

Cease wondering, brother. The lehua blossoms point to Hilo. The scented tapa cloth comes from La'a. The glossy hair was bleached red in the sunlight of Puna. Your dream woman lives on the island of Hawaii somewhere on the Puna coast. I heard of a famous beauty, Kamalalawalu by name. A high chiefess, or a goddess perhaps. Who knows? ~~She is said to be beyond compare, though no man alive boasts of having actually seen her.~~ She is well guarded, and not by mortals only. Eight hundred dogs, they say, are her constant and watchful companions. I doubt that dogs of flesh are meant. She may not have seen a man in all her young life. Certainly she has known no man. The place is tabu. The virgin is tabu. For those who would seek her, death is the penalty. What chance have you brother, with such a princely one? You, a farmer boy.

HALEMANO

chiefhood  
[ ] [ ] There is one more thing, sister, an even stranger thing. One that makes me think that perhaps my dreams, vivid as they seem, are no more than dreams. ~~What I look like to her I know not. But~~ when I take her in my arms ~~I know that~~ the thickness of the cloak I wear enfolds us both. It is made of the precious feathers of the 'i'iwi bird, of beautiful workmanship, and red, of the color reserved for royalty. From my hand, as I close my arms around her, a princely spear is cast aside. In my heart, besides love, there is indeed a consciousness of power, a majesty of awesome scope that unites what might be proper to earth and to heaven. Sister, in my dreams, why it should be so I know not, I am at least a king!

## LAENIHI

Granny is cooking now for you, dear Halemano. Your stomach is empty. Your head hazy. ~~(Dreams have a way of slipping away from us as consciousness returns.)~~ One thing is sure. Your dream girl exists outside your dreams. Being but a brute man, you would not stand a chance against the strict tabus that ring her loveliness with dread. ~~(Even before you had a glimpse of her, you would be found out and punished.)~~ Lucky brother to have a sister who is a witch and who loves you. I shall go to Puna as your messenger. My magical arts may prove powerless. If that be the case, farewell. Know, brother, that I have loved you more than life itself. *(Exit Laenihi.)* *(OWL HOOTS.)*

*(Grandmother brings to Halemano the food and drink she has just prepared.)*

## HALEMANO

*(Shakes his head as if to clear it)* I am hungry. *(He eats and drinks.)*





same set as 'volcano' but  
lighted in blues. side 'seats'  
w. petroglyph dogs on rocks -  
Transharmacy on place where  
rainbow appears -  
is to

## ACT ONE

X SCENE 2: The inside of a rock cavern. On its walls, pictographs--black silhouettes of dogs, scattered at all levels and leaning at all plumbs, facing all directions. Their scale varies from life-size to heroic.

Two OLD WOMEN, yellowish hanks of hair dangling, squat atop high rocks. Moss-green wraps, torn at the edges. They hold twisted canes with crutchlike heads. Leis of maile vine with flaring tendrils crown their heads and hang from their shoulders.

On a lower level, by the pool, four ATTENDANTS to Kamalawalu--girls young and pretty, in yellow skirts and shawls, with yellow hibiscus flowers tucked over one ear.

Helped from the pool by her attendants, KAMALALAWALU. She is as young as they are and even prettier. She is, however, unnaturally docile. She acts puppet-like, as if she had no will of her own. As she is helped up the bank, the girls shield her with a wide tapa sheet, dyed a deep purple. Next, they wrap the sheet artfully around her, securing it with a knot over one shoulder, leaving the other shoulder exposed. Now the attendants comb her hair, lightly massage her hands, shoulders, and calves. Leis--of lehua blossoms mingled with hala--are tastefully arranged about her shoulders, neck, and head. A small rainbow projects itself against the rock behind her, moving as she moves. It is centered over her shoulders as would be a halo, and may fade out as the action progresses.

*The voices of many birds mingle with the sotto voce humming of the girls as they busy themselves about Kamalalawalu. Chanting and gestures blend rhythmically into a kind of intimate hula, graceful but with a note of underlying sadness.*

## ATTENDANTS

Lei 'akolea  
Kolea, kolea.  
Ki'i ka wai,  
Wai 'akolea.

Aloha wale 'oe,  
Poli anuanu.  
Mae'ele 'oe  
I ka anu e.

He anu ka ua.  
He anu ka wai.  
Li'a ku'u 'ili  
I ka anu e.

Lei 'akolea  
Kolea, kolea.  
Ki'i ka wai,  
Wai 'akolea.

*cold breast  
of the whale  
cold the rain  
" the water  
goose fleshy skin  
from the cold*

*(Kamalalawalu tucks her head in her arms and curls up, relaxed. Gestures and sounds taper off. Soon the girl is asleep. All sound ceases. Attendants hesitate uneasily.)*

## AN ATTENDANT

Grandmothers, come! Kamalalawalu went back to sleep!

*(Twinlike, the old women climb down from their rock and post themselves behind the sleeping girl, leaning on their sticks. As their dialogue unfolds, the one who speaks shall straighten her stance. The one who listens shall hunch further down over the head of her cane. A kind of visual seesaw results, that underlines the alternation of speakers. The old women talk to each other as deaf do to deaf.)*

## OLD WOMAN I

Asleep again. We kept her awake just long enough to be bathed, but no longer. She looks peaceful enough. Sleep is to her what awa is to the drunkard. What can be done?

## OLD WOMAN II

The girls tried pinching to no avail. Drumming and fluting proved equally powerless. It is as if a sheet of blue water had fallen between us. We can see her but she cannot hear us.

## OLD WOMAN I

Perhaps the commands of our late lord were too faithfully observed. ~~[He ordered her surrounded by cordon upon cordon of watchers and guards as a protection.]~~ What adolescent would not pine with ennui under so thorough a tabu? Feverish with what tales are told of the beauty of Kamalalawalu, young men bent on becoming love heroes meet death before they even catch a glimpse of her. Others take their place, only to die. All unknown to itself, this virginal body acts as a lethal snare. This cavern, placed at the marrow of this vast estate, breeds awe. As does a spider that crouches at the center of its deployed web and waits for some telltale outer motion.

## OLD WOMAN II

She knows nothing whatsoever about it; but perhaps she senses something. She herself is caught in the web others have spun on her behalf as much as any gnat or fly.

*(Far-off barking of many dogs, followed by prolonged baying.)*

## OLD WOMAN II

There goes another.

## OLD WOMAN I

Remember the morning we found her? We were roasting bananas by the wayside. There she was lying on our rustic path, where only a moment before nothing was to be seen.

## OLD WOMAN II

*yam*  
Rolling down the slope she was. How shapeless. At first we fancied that a sweet potato had fallen off the load at a carrier's back. But of course no one had passed us. To vary our fare, you nearly threw her on the hot stones. So shapeless was she. Almost a bulb.

## OLD WOMAN I

*yam*  
Your sight was better than mine. What potato ever had a rainbow to follow it wherever it went? You held it in your hand, and the rainbow was right there in your palm, coloring your fingers with its many hues!

OLD WOMAN II *[What else to do but bring...]*

*I I yam*  
What else was there ~~to do~~ but to bring our find to the temple to be assessed by priests, soothsayers, and astrologers. On the way, in these very arms, it changed from bulb to body, from sweet potato to female infant. There and then I knew that no mortal womb ever sheltered Kamalalawalu.

## OLD WOMAN I

Priests, soothsayers, and astrologers concurred. The old king was approached. He adopted the celestial infant and put at its service all the might at his command. Indeed, he was a good and a pious king. You and I were ~~snatched from our rustic retreat and we were~~ named her official tutors. *[ ]*

## OLD WOMAN II

No more roast bananas by the roadside for us. Unless the young king flouts his father's will. Anyhow, for both of us, in case the divine child fails to awake, death.

*(Off stage, another cacophony of barks. Starting far off, they quickly build to a crescendo. As they close in about the cave the barks stop abruptly. Suddenly, something in swift flight crosses the stage. In a single pendulum movement, the arc of the flight dips low over the pool center stage. As it does so, a tinkling noise, as if some small object has been dropped in the water. An instant later the flying thing is gone and loud barks resume outside the cave. They taper off, diminuendo, into the distance.)*

*(The sleeping Kamalalawalu excepted, all gaze at the swift streak of motion with wonder.)*

ATTENDANT I

It was an owl!

ATTENDANT II

Something dropped in the pool!

*(All crowd at the edge of the pool, scanning the water.)*

ATTENDANT III

See the fish. Oh, what a pretty fish!

ATTENDANT IV

Fetch a net! Fetch a net!

*(Delight changes to surprise, and surprise to awe. Enter Laenihi from the pool. Dressed as she was before, but with leis of aquatic weeds on head and shoulders and without her staff. She climbs to dry land, shakes herself dry, and takes in the scene.)*

LAENIHI

Aloha to you all. Those dogs, what long teeth they bared. A good thing we flew out of reach! What silly tricks one needs devise just to have a chat with Kamalalawalu. Me, a fish! It's a laugh. I can hardly surf! *(Curtseys to the old women)* Grannies, forgive the intrusion. Had I asked permission, though, would I be in?

OLD WOMAN I

To keep you out would have been a loving kindness. Now that you are in, the tabu is broken and you must die.

OLD WOMAN II

Not alone, though. If Kamalalawalu fails to awake, we'll all die. ~~Yes, even these pretty ones.~~

LAENIHI

And if I awake her?

OLD WOMAN I

That you cannot do. We tried every way.

OLD WOMAN H

Do that, and you shall save our lives. Perhaps not yours, alas! That shall be for the young king to decide.

LAENIHI

Nevertheless, I shall try. (*Gesturing gently for all to leave*) Magicians wield but small magic with loiterers in the way. [I will call you back when Kamalalawalu awakens.]

(*All exit.*)

LAENIHI

(*Chants her high-pitched birdcall*)

Pueo - e, pueo - e.

Pueo e pili i ka ua.

Pueo kanikani i ka ua.

E - pueo! E - pueo!

(*Off-stage hooting. Laenihi nods her understanding. Now she arranges herself cosily close to Kamalalawalu, in a rock scooped out at a slightly lower level. She speaks in an easy conversational tone.*)

LAENIHI

Kamalalawalu, I bring news of Halemano.

(*The sleeping girl awakes without overt motion. She simply raises her head. Her eyes open.*)

KAMALALAWALU

Halemano. You know my Halemano. Beautiful Halemano, without blemish whatsoever, glorious beyond compare, towering as the top of some high peak ringed with clouds in lonely splendor! For days now my dreams have been empty of him. Our forest, with its bone-white crooked trunks, its black rocks moss-cushioned, its giant ferns--how cosy it all was once. How lonely it is now. Night after night I wander through our forest calling him by name, "Halemano! Halemano!" Never an answer. I thought I would die of

loneliness, of cold, and of fright. Oh, tell me about him. Is he but one of those boneless spirits, wraiths that live in people's dreams only? Is he rather a being like us, who still may be seen after dawn? One that may be held in one's arms: not those ghostly hands that spring into action only after our true hands have laid themselves to sleep. Glorious Halemano. Tell me about him.

#### LAENIHI

Indeed your Halemano is made of flesh, with bones in his body, and sinews. One may see him with one's eyes open. Hands like yours or mine may grasp him. If I have my way, you will see him with your seeing eyes and be able to touch him even after you awake.

#### KAMALALAWALU

Then let us start. I shall go to him wherever he is. Where is his kingdom?

#### LAENIHI

What makes you think he is a king?

#### KAMALALAWALU

Just that he is dressed like a king. Like a king going to war, I should say. As he comes to me through the maze of the undergrowth of our forest, I can see from far away the scarlet of his feather cloak, superb as an alarum of conch trumpets. As he comes near, he ducks under, here and there, so that the high crest of his *mahiolo* helmet will not catch on low branches. Once near, he props his royal spear against a black boulder, as if cleansing himself of war before turning to love. When we are together at last, it is under the shelter of the ample folds of his royal cloak, its feathers soft as down. I don't care though if he is a king or not. I love him whoever he is and whatever he does. If he is a farmer I will farm for him. If a fisherman, I will scale his catch. If he is a slave, then I will gladly be the slave of a slave. Wherever he is, let us go.

2 7

*(Rises with decision. Laenihī also rises. From behind the rocks, in not too secret a fashion, the attendants have followed the action. Without*



words, Laenihi signals for them to return. All do so.)

(Off stage, there is quite a commotion. This time, to the barking of dogs are added shouts, trampling of feet, and alarums of conch shells. Preceded by conch trumpeteers and kahili-bearers, surrounded by courtiers and soldiers, flanked by cup-bearer and spilloon-bearer, KING 'A'E-KAPU enters. He is carried in a chaise made of a square net attached from its corners to two long poles. The king reclines in this short hammock, arms folded at the back of his head, legs dangling astride the net. The poles are carried on the shoulders of four runners. They enter at a dog-trot and stop. They carefully lower the poles. As net and poles reach toward the ground, the king rises. He steps out of the flattened chaise and stands, legs apart, facing front. The bearers remain kneeling at their stations. Kamalalawalu's people prostrate themselves before the king, ~~at first both on knees and elbows, then kneeling.~~ Kamalalawalu and Laenihi alone remain standing, holding hands. King 'A'ekapu is in his middle thirties and extremely fat. He is dressed with much care in a skirt of figured tapa reaching to the knees. Over the skirt, a yellow-green malo, or loincloth, wrapped tight and high, acts as a sort of belly corset. Its wide flaps hang front and back. He wears armlets and leggings made with dogs' teeth. A large whale-tooth pendant hangs on the king's chest, held in place by thick braids, auburn-red. The king's hair is long, pulled tightly back and tied in a flowing horsetail that hangs at his back. His beard is sparse, very short and curly. On the king's head is a tiny lei of yellow lehua blossoms, slanted forward. In one hand he holds a thin cane, a twig long and straight, stripped of bark. His voice is high-pitched.)

#### 'A'EKAPU

So this is the abode of the notorious Kamalalawalu. Father made quite a play about it, and quite a secret, too--as if it

were the funeral cave of some famed ancestor! Ever so timid, ever so scrupulous was father, terrified at the idea of stepping on the toes of his gods. In my teens, I wanted to look at that freakish child. Father refused. The girl was god-begotten, father reasoned. ~~To look at her would be rash.~~ To lay a hand on her would be lethal. Poor silly father. Under the thumb of his astrologers, seers, diviners, and prophets the whole of his lifetime! The instant I became king, the whole riffraff of them was dismissed. They were put to work at some useful work for a change: farming, fishing. ~~Some of the prophets waxed nasty. They had to be silenced.~~ No more living on the fat of the offerings now. Those temple folks ~~who remain~~<sup>now</sup> their ribs stick out from their hungry frames, as do those of my other slaves. Father well deserved his name: Kahukapu, keeper of tabus. As for me, I shall earn the name I chose for myself: 'A'ekapu, the one who treads upon tabus. Here I am, ready to correct one more abuse, to destroy yet another of father's fairy tales.

*(Taking the cane in both hands, the king first holds it high over his head, then lowers it with great force over his raised knee. The cane breaks in two. The king throws it down and tramples it. He is a little out of breath at the exertion.)*

'A'EKAU

*(In a loud voice)* The tabu is broken!

*(Subservient and flattering noises from his retinue. Now the king turns around to look at the prostrate women: the two guardians and the four attendants. A curt gesture of dismissal. All exit, hunched and walking backwards so as not to turn their backs on the king.)*

*(He goes to the two girls who have remained standing.)*

'A'EKAU

*(To Laenih)* Why are you standing? Do you not know your king?

## LAENIHI

*(Curtsey. Head averted)* I am Laenihi, a traveler. I sailed from Hana, in the kingdom of Maui.

## 'A'EKAU

Our customs may be strange to you. You are free.

*(Laenihi steps away from Kamalalawalu. The king turns to Kamalalawalu. She stands very still, flattened against the rock wall. Again the rainbow is over her shoulders, faintly visible. All look her way.)*

## 'A'EKAU

So this is Kamalalawalu. The fruit has matured splendidly in its secret orchard. Ready to be plucked off. Worthy of being bit into, fit for a king! *(He displays himself before Kamalalawalu, flexing his legs and arms, throwing his chest forward, showing himself front and back)* Lucky child, at long last to feast your eyes on a man. Nay, more than a man, a king! It must dazzle you indeed to see so much beauty clothed with so much power. Do not quake, child. There shall be more wonders, new wonders to come.

*(A STEWARD rushes to the king. A quick prostration.)*

## STEWARD

The rainbow, sire. On her shoulders. It suggests caution.

## 'A'EKAU

What rainbow? *(He scans the scene attentively. Dusk has spread over the cavern. In the failing light, the rainbow asserts itself unmistakably. Peevishly)* I see no rainbow. You know how superstition upsets me. Soon, perhaps, you shall join my father.

*(Steward backs away hurriedly. 'A'ekapu goes to Kamalalawalu. She stands quite still, flattened against the rock wall very much like a small animal at bay. Crowding her heavily, the king presses both his hands against the rock at shoulder height, framing her head in his arms.)*

*you must*

'A'EKAU

You shall be my queen.

*(Total darkness on the stage and a peal of thunder. Light again. 'A'ekapu is in the same attitude as before. Kamalalawalu and Laenihī are gone. The king turns around violently.)*

'A'EKAU

It's a trick. Guards, soldiers, all of you! Run after her. Find her. Find her or I shall proclaim such a tabu that it will mean death for all of you! Go!

*(All scatter. In a tantrum, 'A'ekapu violently pounds the floor with the flat of his feet, and alternately claps his hands in command and closes his fists in anger, in a sort of impromptu dance.)*



Prop: Probably right corner of stage

## ACT ONE

X SCENE 3: A fishing canoe anchored in the middle of a sea channel between Maui and Hawaii.

*The floater of its outrigger in the foreground. The beflagged mast and the beautiful curve of the bamboo rib of its sail rise against the blue sky. The sail--made of hala mat--is rolled and lashed to the mast. From the rim of the craft fishing lines radiate, cast in all directions. One hears in the distance an indistinct and muffled beat of drums.*

*Dozing in the canoe, an OLD FISHERMAN. His sunburnt skin is almost black. He is bald. A short beard does little more than fringe with white the edge of his lower jaw. The fisherman is clad in a commoner's loincloth. All fishing lines are gathered in his hands.*

*One of the lines moves. Fisherman opens his eyes, goes to investigate. He reels the long twine in. Securely tied at its end a large cowrie shell, smooth and purplish in color. Embracing this lure tightly with its many arms, a milk-white octopus. Fisherman dangles it outside before pulling it on board. Businesslike, he pries the octopus away from the lure and throws it to the bottom of the boat. Then he carefully lets out shell and line to sea.*

### OLD FISHERMAN

Poor, succulent, greedy monster. Nothing holds it to that shell but greed. It wraps its legs about it, craving to digest its soft insides. As I pull up, some sort of brute pride makes

← send  
2 lines  
from Act 2  
Sc 4 from  
MO2 & MO1

it refuse to free itself and dive to safety. The catch piles up, its blue-white pulp still writhing with desire. One sees black blood course through the translucent bodies, as one sees blood pulse at the throat of a blushing maid. It takes long to thicken that black juice to stillness. At last passive, the beast becomes a tasty mouthful for man.

*(Though far off, the drumming speeds its tempo and increases in complexity. It comes alternately from left and from right. Over the sea channel, island kingdom thus talks to island kingdom.)*

#### OLD FISHERMAN

Octopus fishing is reputed the most peaceful of trades. And so it was when I was a young fisherman. I grew up alone with my lures and my catch, alone with my thoughts. Those drums! Kings are like the octopus. To what they have they hold tight, and crave to embrace what they have not. [Nowadays a fever affects the whole of this vast world. It reaches to the most remote parts of our sea channels.] Those drums! They make me feel, placed between them as I am, like a referee at a boxing match. *(Points left)* On this side, Kapuloa, King of Maui. He is my lord, as I come from Hana. *(Points right)* On that side, 'A'ekapu, King of Puna, on the island of Hawaii. No friend of us Maui men, that one. And no friend of the gods, they say. Those drums! They were at it already before dawn. These kings sound like old women beating their tapa sticks on their tapa boards, to convey village gossip to other villagers. At least, old women produce useful stuff while they tap their silly sayings: clothing for the family. Kings do no such thing. The only fruit one expects from their drumming is war. War and taxes: of taro, of tapa, of breadfruit and of fish. How much of my catch will be impounded by state officers on landing? ~~I'd say more than last time, with all of that kingly chatter spilled over my ocean.~~ Crazy with greed, the world. Only the ocean makes sense. It has been pleasant for the whole of a lifetime to hug it close, as a farmer does his clod of soil; and to farm the sea with line and sinker.

*(Drumming waxes in short staccato phrases that fly in swift exchanges as sharp as proffered insults.)*

## OLD FISHERMAN

There they go. ~~The only thing different about it this time~~ is the war will be fought over a woman, they say. A good looker I suppose. *(Stops talking. Listens attentively)* Last seen in Puna with a native of Hana, subject to the King of Maui. Hana. That brings it uncomfortably close to home. Poor neighbor farmers. The moment the enemy lands, there go their crops.

*(Drumming ceases, is replaced by conch-shell alarums.)*

## OLD FISHERMAN

That's that. Now for some action to follow the words. And if war fleets rush my way, be they friends or foes, there I go down, canoe, catch and all, to join my beloved fish of the deep. A funny thing that would be, to end in the belly of some giant octopus!

*(Sour laugh. Fisherman goes back to dozing. Again there is a tug at one of his lines, this time on the far side of the canoe. Fisherman opens his eyes, goes to line and starts to reel it in. Two human hands grasp the side of the canoe. Mimic of surprise. The frightened fisherman backs away as far as the small size of the craft permits. La-enihi hauls herself aboard. Somewhat bedraggled, hair hanging wet and straight. She seats herself on the ledge and hauls in the rest of the line. At its end, holding as if for life to the cowrie shell, also mussed up, Kamalalawalu. Both girls are in high good humor. Hooting of an owl far off, off stage. Fisherman can stand no more. Hunches and tightly covers his head with both arms. A deep grunt.)*

## OLD FISHERMAN

Auwe!

## KAMALALAWALU

Never will I trust a witch again.

## LAENIHI

I told you this would spread my magic too thin. I am but a small witch. That getaway was out of my class entirely!



*(Peals of laughter from both.)*

KAMALALAWALU

For love of your brother, both of us! Look at you. You look like a witch!

LAENIHI

You look like a witch, too! We left in such a hurry. Not even a traveler's calabash for a change of tapa! Sit down, Kamalalawalu. I'll do your hair if you do mine.

KAMALALAWALU

Do my hair and I'll do yours!

*(Peals of laughter both. They cozily arrange themselves. Kamalalawalu kneels at the bottom of the canoe. Laenihi, standing, combs Kamalalawalu's hair with her fingers, ties it in a bulky knot on top of her head. Then, Laenihi shall sit and Kamalalawalu do the same for her. As they work they sing. Very light and gay.)*

KAMALALAWALU AND LAENIHI

*Pu'ili, pu'ili 'ohelo 'ai a ka manu  
Ke 'ai holoholo la i ka uka o Puna.  
Kau ana ka la e kau ana.  
Kau ana ke aloha i ku'u maka.  
Ke ho'oluhi nei i ku'u kino.  
Ke lalawe nei i ku'u 'ao'ao.  
Aloha ka ukana a ke aloha la.  
Pu'ili, pu'ili 'ohelo 'ai a ka manu  
Ke 'ai holoholo la i ka uka o Puna.*

*(Their work done and the song over, the girls admire each other. Peals of laughter. Fisherman, little by little, has overcome his fright. Without coming closer, he now looks at the girls admiringly.)*

OLD FISHERMAN

You goddesses?

LAENIHI

Well. . .

KAMALALAWALU

Yes and no!

*(Laughter both.)*

OLD FISHERMAN

If you are girls, I won't ask questions. *(Craftily)* But if you are sailing with me, I want to barter.

*(Peals of laughter from the girls. They both rush to him. Laenihi rubs her nose against his. Kamalalawalu kisses the top of his pate.)*

LAENIHI

There's your fee.

KAMALALAWALU

There's your fee.

OLD FISHERMAN

*(mollified)* It isn't quite what I had in mind. ~~You are nice. It will have to do.~~ <sup>thought</sup> Where do you want to go?

LAENIHI

Anywhere on the coast as long as it's Hana. Where are you from?

OLD FISHERMAN

Hana. Say, you are the girls the two kings are looking for! That changes everything. If I smuggle you in and the king knows about it, I'll ~~become~~ a tabu-breaker.

*(Laenihi and Kamalalawalu again embrace him. This time it is Kamalalawalu who rubs her nose to his and Laenihi who kisses his pate.)*

OLD FISHERMAN

All right. I'll do it. We fishermen know places that no officer of the king ever will know. I'll take you to my cove. You'll have to dive in though. It's the only way.

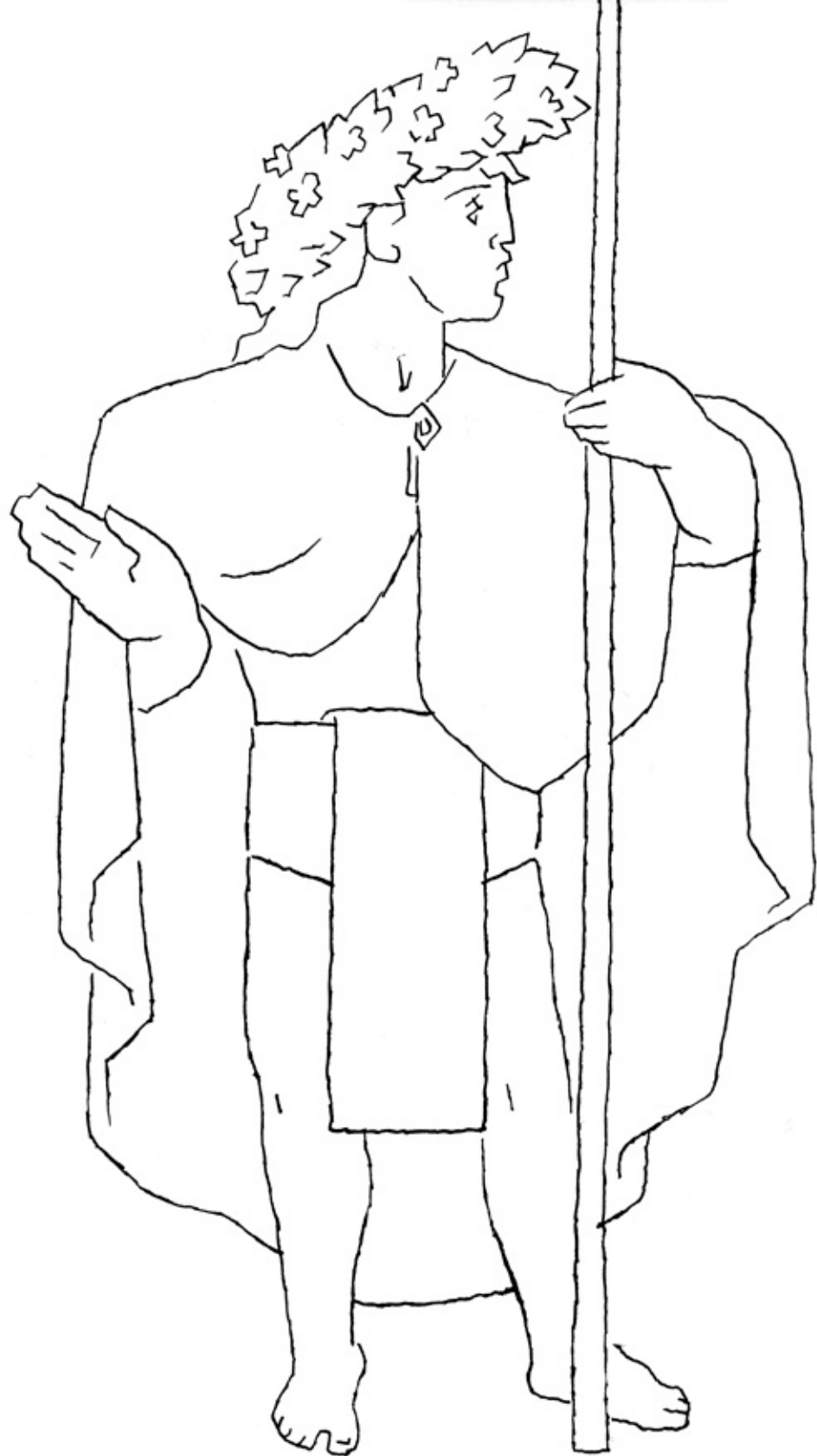
*(Girls clap their hands for joy. Fisherman unrolls the mat and begins to haul it up the mast with a sort of pulley arrangement.)*

OLD FISHERMAN

Help me, girls. We are on our way.

*(Peals of laughter from the girls. They help with the sail.)*





Temple portion of circular set -

Kapulea - suggest Norman Wright  
(East West Center Press.)  
Carl Essler?

High Priest = "Thoreau"

## ACT ONE

X SCENE 4: *The inner court of the royal temple, Maui.*

*An open court with thatched buildings lining it on both sides, enclosed at the back by the edge of a raised area, a sort of high step showing its core of piled-up lava blocks. On top of the platform are two buildings: a high tower and a thatched hut.*

*The tower is located at a side in the background. It is square in plan, an open scaffolding tapering up, with superimposed platforms. Purple tapa decorously garlands it. On the platforms, offerings of fish and fruits are laid on fresh banana leaves and covered with palm fronds.*

*The hut is set at the center of the raised area. It is quite small, with a square opening in its grass wall only slightly bigger than that in a doghouse. At the sides of the hut are stick-idols irregularly planted, unrelated in height and scale, carved in "primitive" style. In front of the hut, two long tabu-sticks planted diagonally crisscross each other over the top of the door.*

*In the lower court, background, ranged against the wall in two symmetrical rows, the retinue of the king awaits him: kahili-bearers, servants, courtiers. A central path is left free.*

*In the same court, foreground, a ceremony comes to a close.*

*Center, a large wooden bowl filled with water. Standing, bent over it, the HIGH PRIEST. He is draped in white. On his head a thick crown of maile vine. Its entwined stems, leaves and tendrils, give it the shape and texture of a large inverted bird's nest. An assistant, a PRIEST, holds a calabash cup that contains sand. Taking a handful of sand at a time, the high priest lets it trickle from his hand into the water, through closed fingers. He examines the resulting ripples with deep absorption, then repeats the procedure. Other priests squat or kneel close by, informally. All priests are clad in white. Open maile leis hang from their shoulders.*

*A space is kept open for traffic and for decorum between the priests and the spectators, soldiers, and musicians, who fill the four corners of the court. In the back, spearmen in short tapa capes mingle with men and women dressed in commoners' clothes, dun-colored. In the foreground, symmetrically disposed at both sides of the stage, drummers. They stand behind their drums, facing the audience. Drums are of two kinds: high drums, shoulder high, drummed standing; low drums, drummed kneeling. As the scene begins, the musicians keep their fingertips in quick motion at the edge of the drumheads, producing a deep monotonous sort of humming. As speaking begins, the sound tapers off. Without stopping his ceremonial gestures, the high priest speaks for the ear of his assistant only.*

#### HIGH PRIEST

Has the king emerged from his oratory? I cannot keep doing this forever!

#### PRIEST

He is still in there. If he gets ever more pious, he shall be so close to the gods he will hardly need our ministrations!

#### HIGH PRIEST

Lay folks should shun excesses. They should keep away from extremes. Look what happens in Puna. It is said, King 'A'ekapu demotes his priests to farmers and fishermen, and bakes his prophets in ovens. But here in Hana our king --pious king that he is--plays at being his own high priest.

He prays so very much. Affairs of state, after all, are, or should be, the gist of a king's work.

PRIEST

What I say is: leave the ceremonies and the divination to those who have studied such matters.

HIGH PRIEST

We are on the brink of war. Ministers, land chiefs, sea chiefs, canoe hewers, weapon makers, storers of provisions, feather craftsmen, spies, orators, and--why not mention it--farmers and fishermen, all wait breathlessly. As expected, the king calls for his astrologers, seers, and vaticinators. We come in public procession and start work: Are the conjunctions of stars propitious? Is the month auspicious? Should offerings of fruit fit the occasion? Or of hogs? Or of slaves? Decisions such as these are not to be lightly taken!

PRIEST

Our king does not even wait for them. He closets himself with his god overnight.

HIGH PRIEST

I wish I knew what his god <sup>tells him</sup> ~~said~~. I hope it's the same thing <sup>I'll suggest.</sup> ~~I was told.~~ I so wish the gods could be trusted. Their sense of humor can be rather morbid.

A VOICE

(From inside the hut) Guards! Guards!

*(The crowd stirs. The king's retinue stiffens to attention. The spearmen detach themselves hurriedly from the crowd and, from right and left, climb at a run to the low opening in the hut. On all fours, to conform to the size of the door, KING KAPULOA half emerges, gives inaudible orders, with gestured directions, to his attentive guards, bent double the better to hear him. Then, with great zeal they scatter at a gallop. Now the king emerges from his oratory. He is a tiny man, very lean, dressed in a black tapa cloak. The*



*cloak is made up of two sheets, hanging front and back, held together by bulky knots, one on each shoulder. When the king is seen sideways, under the black cloak the royal red malo may be seen. The only other sign of royalty is a large whale-tooth necklace, held by braids of human hair.)*

*(The king stands for an instant at the edge of the raised area in front of the hut. All commoners prostrate themselves. Musicians now turn in profile to face center, and keep their hands at the ready over the drumheads. The high priest signals. The water calabash is pushed aside.)*

*(The priests kneel in two rows facing each other, leaving between them an empty alley that leads straight to the door of the hut. Foreground, high priest stands looking toward the king. King nimbly jumps down the high step into the court. In a voice astonishingly strong for his small size he starts chanting a sort of litany. As he does so, he walks with slow, stately steps down the central alley. Behind him, his attendants, coming from right and left, follow in procession, two by two. At the end of his chant he will have reached center stage foreground. After each invocation, all mumble in answer, mouths closed, and the drummers drum. The basso note of high drums alternates with the higher-pitched note of the low drums.)*

KING

O Kahaka'a-keku-e, O Kepoloha'ina!

PEOPLE

*(Mumbled)* 'Amama.

*(Drumming on high drums only.)*

KING

O Kekuliaihekua, O Lonomakaihe!

PEOPLE  
'Amama.

*(Drumming on low drums only.)*

KING  
O Lonoikiaweawealoha, O Lonopuakau!

PEOPLE  
'Amama.

*(High drums.)*

KING  
O 'Apanapo'o, O Po'o'iole'a!

PEOPLE  
'Amama.

*(Low drums.)*

KING  
E Kanikawi, e Kanikawa!

PEOPLE  
'Amama.

*(High drums.)*

KING  
E Kumahumahukolo, e Koloka'aka!

PEOPLE  
'Amama.

*(Low drums.)*

KING  
*(In another style between speaking and chanting)* E na akua  
ho'oheu o Kamalama-e.

*(No answer to this one, and no drumming. It is  
the end. King Kapuloa has reached front center*

*stage, where the high priest is waiting for him. He stops. His retinue stops behind him.)*

KING

How am I doing?

HIGH PRIEST

*(Deep inclination)* Magnificent, magnificent, sire.

KING

Not bad for an amateur, eh? Now to business: What did you read, with your trained eye, in the ripples of the water of the sacred calabash?

HIGH PRIEST

Those ripples were rippling in so many <sup>ways</sup> ~~directions~~, O great king. I would say the faces of the gods are turned East and West, North and South, both inland and toward the sea.

KING

You could spare me the formula, my friend. Do the gods really converse with you in some sort of a double talk?

*(Pause)* They don't do that to me, you know. ~~For me, every thing they say makes sense.~~ Oh, well, beginner's luck, I <sup>16</sup> would say. *(Pause)* ~~In fact,~~ They gave me such a precise notion both of the fellow to look for and where to find him that even my guards could hardly fail to flush him out ~~and to bring him back.~~ The only thing I don't quite know is: do the gods want him ~~to be punished~~ or do they want him ~~to be~~ rewarded. There was some ~~conflict~~ <sup>static</sup> there.

*(Enter guards, roughly handling a prisoner. It is Halemano, hands tied in back.)*

KING

~~Here they bring him now.~~ We shall see.

*(Brought before Kapuloo, Halemano prostrates himself, flanked by two guards, each holding an end of the twine that binds him.)*

KING

You are Halemano, living at Hana?

*(Halemano nods.)*

KING

Very well. Are you a pious man?

*(Halemano looks blank.)*

KING

Do you, how shall I put it, chum with the gods?

*(Halemano still looks blank. King looks at high priest. High priest nods an imperceptible "yes.")*

KING

Affairs of state call me. Please proceed, O Venerable One.  
~~I shall be back shortly.~~

*(Exit Kapuloo, followed by his retinue.)*

HIGH PRIEST

*(On a fishing expedition)* Doubtless you know why the king had you brought before me?

*(Halemano's face remains blank.)*

HIGH PRIEST

What you have done, my lad, is nothing to be trifled with. ~~Certainly you cannot be such a rustic as to ignore the fact that what you did shook perhaps the foundations of the kingdom!~~ *(Ponders)* Let us take it from another angle; you know that, as your high priest, as a man deeply versed in the reading of signs and omens, steeped in ancestral ceremonies, I detect, one would say as a second nature, upsets and schisms in the realm of the gods. This time, all signs point to one man, you. To stir up the quiet of the gods is a serious matter indeed. What do you have to say for yourself?

HALEMANO

Only that I would like to go home, exalted one. The girl I love loves me. And we have seen each other only in our dreams. ~~Did you ever hear of such a thing?~~ And this very day, in my own house, she was to come to me. ~~But, alas, the king's men took me away.~~ Oh, let me go to her. I so long

for her. And if it pleases you, sir, in our very embrace we shall both think kindly of you.

#### HIGH PRIEST

Very touching. Very touching. (*Turns to priest*) Why, the lad is a simple lad, or more than simple. ~~All his concern is of love.~~ Boy meets girl, tcha! What a plot to bring on his head either the pleasure or the wrath of the gods! [~~Our king is only an amateur in these recondite matters. As expected, he blundered.~~ Yet, if I release the fellow, our lord will be angered.] What to do? I know. Get us two straws.

*(The priest goes to one of the thatched houses and picks two straws. Obviously he understands what is meant, and arranges them carefully in one hand. Offers his hand to high priest. High priest picks a straw, compares it with the one the priest still holds. High priest holds the long straw.)*

#### HIGH PRIEST

That does it!

*(Re-enter King Kapulua with his retinue.)*

#### KING

*(To high priest)* Well?

#### HIGH PRIEST

Sire, I must report that your unfailing insight ~~astonishingly~~ saw further than ~~all~~ our professional routines. All the signs are auspicious. The conjunctions, the syzygies, the past and future eclipses, they all point to this boy as ~~to~~ one who sits in the lap of the gods.

#### KING

See now! Don't take lightly my knack at these spiritual things. ~~As I told you,~~ the gods act fair and square with me. I feel proud and humbled.

*(In rush two pages, one carrying a red feather cloak, the other a spear. They kneel before Kapulua wordlessly. Behind them, high chiefs in red feather capes and helmets, armed with war clubs. They too wait.)*

*\* our King, as expected, blundered*

## KING

(Gravely) So then, our royal neighbor, 'A'ekapu, ~~has judged it expedient to declare~~ war. His might, it is true, outmatch-  
 es ours, and yet his move shall prove ~~to be~~ foolish. Little  
 does he realize that we are shielded by the might of the gods.  
 [That we are at this juncture invincible. ~~There is nothing he~~  
~~can do to change that.~~ (To chiefs, pointing to high priest)  
 This venerable one and I, we ~~are both agreed on one fact:~~  
 the omens could not be better. Victory lies in following  
 scrupulously the express will of the gods. So. . . (Points to  
 Halemano). . . untie him!

(Guards untie Halemano.)

## KING

O chiefs, O champions, you see before you this man, Hale-  
 mano by name! He is the instrument, hand-picked by the  
 gods, that shall insure ~~the welfare of our kingdom in its time~~  
 of crisis.

(Taking the feather cloak from the hands of his  
 page Kapulua wraps it over Halemano's shoul-  
 ders. He puts the spear in Halemano's hand.)

## KING

As If I throw my ~~own~~ royal mantle over Halemano's shoulders,  
 it is to acknowledge this decision from above. The spear  
 signifies his god-given might. Until victory ~~over 'A'ekapu~~  
 has become fact, all of my royal powers shall be gathered  
 in Halemano's hands. Kneel!

(Chiefs kneel. Kapulua ponders a moment. Then  
 with a quick and forceful gesture, he snatches  
 from the head of the dismayed high priest his dis-  
 tinctive head-lei, and puts it on Halemano's head.  
 High priest and his priests back away, with hard-  
 ly controlled angry gestures. Unmindful, Kapu-  
 loa proceeds.)

## KING

[Obeying the gods as he must.] The venerable one willingly  
 surrenders the sacred headgear, token of his high-priest-

him hood. From now on, Halemano shall be our intercessor before the gods. All of you, religious men, pay obeisance to Halemano. Kneel!

*(As the king addresses them directly, high priest and attendants stop backing away. They gingerly put a knee to the ground, high priest included. Halemano now stands center stage, between the two kneeling groups of chiefs and priests.)*

## KING

Your precious person, Halemano, should be ~~well guarded~~ and suitably attended. Let my servants be your servants and my guards ~~be~~ your ~~body~~ guards.

*(A sign to waiting servants and courtiers. They gather behind Halemano.)*

## KING

Beloved Halemano, ~~all will now work smoothly.~~ May the cares of a kingdom at war weigh not too heavily on your feathered shoulders! May celestial rainbows ~~frame~~ you with colors and ~~bathe~~ you in light! *(Rubs hands gleefully)* Good! It is with a free mind that I shall again closet myself with the god.

*(Kapuloa nimbly climbs ledge to the central hut. Exits on all fours through its very low door.)*

## HALEMANO

*(Stands center, hands extended toward both groups, with nobility)* The king's commands shall be obeyed. *(To chiefs)* Gather at the beach all weapon hewers, canoe makers, oarsmen and champions. One and all, they shall receive their orders.

*(Chiefs rise and exit.)*

## HALEMANO

*(To priests)* Rise. *(To high priest)* For a man so deeply steeped in wisdom, O Venerable One, to notice turns of fate would be too worldly. But for the lay person that I am, ~~changes of fortune provide food for thought.~~ *not*

*(Takes sacred head-lei from his own head and offers it to high priest. High priest takes it and passes it in turn to an assistant priest.)*

#### HALEMANO

~~The assembled chiefs await me. Yet, before I go to them I wish to consult you on a private matter, a matter of the heart. I need your help.~~

*(High priest, obviously far from mollified, makes a noncommittal gesture.)*

#### HALEMANO

That woman I love and who loves me, up to now we shared each other only in our dreams. ~~[It does seem strange, indeed, this longing and this passion carried wholly outside the flesh. But surely not for a man as versed as you are, O Venerable One, in spiritual matters.]~~ She was raised on the island of Hawaii, in the kingdom of Puna. Of late, my Kamalalawalu received the attentions of King 'A'ekapu and incurred his enmity. She fled his island. She is here now. This very morning we were to meet at last. *(Takes a strip of tapa from under his cloak. Gives it to the high priest)* Please, Highest One, go to my house in the woods. ~~[The guards who arrested me know the way.]~~ In my name, ~~give~~ to Kamalalawalu this token. Tell her ~~that~~ I cannot this moment go to her, that she must come to me. Please do this for us, Venerable One.

*(Halemano and attendants exit. High priest nervously fingers the token. His men anxiously close around him.)*

#### HIGH PRIEST

The simplicity of this Halemano plays into our hands. Ordering me around like an errand boy! As if he did not by now have all the king's men to do his bidding, and to do it at a gallop, so powerful has he become! *(Explodes in deep anger)* Fool of a little king! ~~[Foolishness is one thing. Stupidity another.]~~ Snatching my own sacred crown from my own sacred head, and doing it for all men and all slaves to see, all of them, all of them! *(Snatches his crown from attendant priest, throws it to the ground, tramples on it.)* Making a spectacle of me. Giving my very own exalted position to



that country bumpkin, picked out of his backwoods by a long straw! I wish it had come out the short straw. Then, he would be a corpse, lying naked on the tower of sacrifices, food for maggots under the banana leaves! "I love her. She loves me. She loves me. I love her." What a silly dreamy story. The sweetness of it all makes me retch! No doubt the girl ~~who waits for him at the house in the woods~~ is the very same one the King of Puna lusts for. So badly does ~~the~~ <sup>he</sup> ~~king~~ want that woman, he is waging war <sup>on us</sup> to get her back. Whoever should deliver her into his hands will be sure of reward most ~~glorious~~ <sup>substantial</sup> - chiefhood, lands, and slaves.

*(All huddle together conspiratorially.)*

HIGH PRIEST

We will kidnap the girl, leave an ingrate kingdom <sup>taking with us</sup> ~~with~~ this choice gift for our new lord, 'A'ekapu. Traitors to our king, they'll say. The dunce brought it upon himself. It should prove easy enough to waylay the maid with, in my hands, the <sup>undoubted</sup> token Halemano chose to convince her that I am his trusted messenger.

*(All exit.)*





left corner of stage lights 'hut'  
circular segment 'forest'  
in dark background

## ACT TWO

*SCENE 1: Same set as Act I, Scene 1. Interior of a hut, Hana, Maui. As the scene opens, Kaukaali'i wails, kneeling before Halemano's empty mat.*

### KAUKAALI'I

Halemano, grandson, whom I pulled out of your dying mother's womb, auwe! Halemano, whose umbilical cord I cut with my own teeth, auwe! What use was there in raising you from birth! And again what use in raising you from death after you had died of love! Oh, that your sister had left well enough alone! To die of love was a mild death. Who knows what your second death will be. A sacrifice to the gods likely: to lie, naked and strangled, in the chilly night air, on top of the temple tower. To join, clothed with that flesh I helped bring into the world, the rotting breadfruits and the blanched bones of hogs and slaves. Auwe! Why would our king send for you this day. On the very same day that your wish would have received its fulfillment. ~~[When both of you, each eager to fall into the other's arms, at long last would have sated a shared longing.]~~ Soon she'll be here. But the king's soldiers, they have carried our Halemano away, hog-tied and branded a victim. Auwe!

*(Kaukaali'i quietens. Enter Laenihi and Kamalalawalu. Laenihi is wrapped in a sarong-like tapa, vividly patterned. Kamalalawalu is dressed in skirt and shawl of figured tapa. Leis of lehua blossoms braided with the fruit of the hala. They stop as they take in the scene.)*

LAENIHI *Granny, Granny*  
~~Grandmother~~, Grandmother, what is it?

KAUKAALI'I

You are back, my Laenihi, ~~just as the fisherman said~~, and this girl, she is Halemano's Kamalalawalu. A dream girl indeed. But soon her dream will turn to sorrow. The soldiers of the king, they took our Halemano away!

*(Both girls are stunned by the news. Kamalalawalu, fainting in Laenihi's arms, slides to ground.)*

KAUKAALI'I

How beautiful she is. Truly made of the stuff dreams are made of. No wonder my boy closed his eyes before his weathered old granny and chose instead to open them on Kamalalawalu, queen of an enchanted forest. Just the two together, what more could he have wished?

LAENIHI

Grandmother, why the "auwes"? Why frighten her? War is declared. Men are mustered. The war over, brother will be back.

KAUKAALI'I

[ True. It gave me a turn, ~~those armed intruders~~. ] I have lived too long. I have seen so much. I come to expect the worst.

KAMALALAWALU

*(Recovering from her faint)* Where is he? Wherever he is I must go to him.

[ ~~KAUKAALI'I~~ ] LAENIHI

[ Yes, child. ] Soon you shall be with your Halemano. And now stop your worry and your weeping. Or you'll get all chapped and wrinkled like an old kukui nut, ~~or like a certain grandmother I know~~. Live for Halemano's return. His love would wane should your beauty wither.

KAMALALAWALU

I don't ask that he should love me. I only want to love him. I'd rather be with him in the form of a fish or of a rat than

be the prettiest of all and without my Halemano. ~~[I will never sleep again. Why sleep! Why eat! I miss him ever so much more terribly now that he is gone from my dreams.]~~ I should have stayed there in Puna. Yes, even if it meant being a slave to this slobbering fat fellow who calls himself a king! My Halemano would get so mad at him. In his fury, he would go to battle single-handed against that whole kingdom's might. He would cross the seas alone in his canoe, rush in terrible to behold, slay all of the king's champions, then slay the king, and rescue me! *(Claps hands happily)* Why, it would be just like in a story. It would be the most beautiful and pitiful love story a storyteller ever told! Over and over again would lovers hug closer and cry, and laugh, and cry, under the spell cast by the storyteller telling our very own story. *(Sadly)* ~~Instead of that, beloved Laenihi, we are here. . . but he is gone!~~ Oh, please, Laenihi, just one little tug at your magic so he'll return and forever stay with us!

*(Laenihi shakes her head sadly.)*

#### KAMALALAWALU

Or at least so he'll send someone to fetch me. . . *(Wishing forcefully, eyes closed)*. . . this instant! *(Opens eyes in anticipation.)*

*(Enter high priest, face half-hid under scarf thrown low over his head. His followers, also veiled, crowd silently at the door.)*

#### HIGH PRIEST

*(Softly and smoothly)* Which one of you is Kamalalawalu? ~~Halemano sends me,~~ *(Her defenses down, Kamalalawalu rushes to him. High priest hands her the token)* His token. ~~[A sure sign that I am his trusted messenger.]~~

*(Kamalalawalu takes token, fervently presses it to her breast.)*

#### KAMALALAWALU

*(To high priest)* Dear Halemano. I shall not keep him waiting. Show me the way. Please hurry!

*(Giving the token to Laenihi, Kamalalawalu exits with high priest. Laenihi and Kaukaali'i examine the token.)*

KAUKAALI'I

It is his true token.

LAENIHI

But this messenger, is he <sup>man</sup> <sup>his</sup> a true messenger? Something unclean clings about the man <sup>him</sup>.

*(Off stage, conch alarums, trampling of feet, short raps on drums.)*

LAENIHI

*(Goes to door)* Our woods are jammed with troops. More soldiers than trees. They circle. They settle.

KAUKAALI'I

Ill omens!

*(Both women huddle in corner, far from door.)*

KEEPER OF KAPUS

*(Off-stage voices)* E noho e! To your knees. E noho e! To your knees. The chief of chiefs is approaching.

*(Two kahili-bearers enter at a trot. Stand at each corner of the stage foreground, facing each other. Enter KEEPER OF KAPUS. He is draped in a reddish toga, Roman-like. He holds a tabu-stick for a staff, a stick topped with a tapa-wrapped ball. He takes his post at the side of the door.)*

KEEPER OF KAPUS

Await his will.

*(Both women, already seated, lower their heads.)*

KEEPER OF KAPUS

Avert your eyes. The chief's loincloth.

*(Enter malo-bearer at a trot, displaying over the palms of his upturned hands a red strip of tapa cloth. Takes his stand background.)*

KEEPER OF KAPUS

The chief's awa cup. Tremble.

*(Enter drink steward, holding a calabash cup with both hands. Takes his stand beside malo-bearer.)*

KEEPER OF KAPUS

Quake. The chief's fan.

*(Enter at a trot fanbearer. Stops beside drink steward.)*

KEEPER OF KAPUS

Prostrate yourselves. The sacred container.

*(Spittoon-bearer enters. Stops beside fanbearer. A conch-trumpet call from off stage.)*

KEEPER OF KAPUS

Cringe. The person of the chief.

*(Enter Halemano, splendidly attired in red malo, red feather cloak, and helmet. The cloak is so vast that it drapes itself in thick folds on the bend of his arm. Halemano holds a spear. Other chiefs, also in feather cloaks and helmets, armed with war clubs, gather outside the door.)*

HALEMANO

*(Eagerly)* ~~To wait there was too slow.~~ Where is she?

*(Laenihi and Kaukaali'i raise their heads, dumb-founded.)*

LAENIHI

Halemano!

*(Halemano signals for his retainers to leave. Exit retainers, backing away so as not to turn their*



*backs on him. Chiefs remain just outside the door. Eager for news and quite unconcerned with his new splendor, Halemano rushes to his grandmother. One knee to the ground, one hand on her shoulder.)*

HALEMANO

Granny, forgive the dreaded accessories. Where is Kama-lalawalu?

KAUKAALI'I

*(Holding up token)* She was shown your token.

HALEMANO

I know. I know that. We should have crossed each other's paths by now!

*(Signals. An OFFICER rushes in. Obeisance.)*

HALEMANO

The high priest, his men, and a girl. Find them.

*(Exit officer.)*

HALEMANO

*(To women)* You say she truly was here and you truly saw her!

LAENIHI

That cloak, Halemano?

HALEMANO

It is the royal cloak! You are looking at a commander of  
 armies, a chief of chiefs. ~~[ Our pious king, following the  
 ever-mysterious will of the gods, made me all of that and  
 more besides. Pray that I will prove strong enough and wise  
 enough to save our kingdom, and justify the gods.]~~ Our lord  
 invested me as well with the tokens of supreme priesthood.  
*(Ponders)* The high priest. Yes, the high priest was my  
 messenger!

LAENIHI

Brother, there was something evil about this man. A whiff of violence clung to him.

(Officer returns.)

# OFFICER

They were seen at the beach. The woman was tied up, a captive. ~~There was a canoe held in readiness. By now they should be halfway to the horizon.~~ The coast of Puna seems their goal.

# HALEMANO

(Gravely. A vow) 'A'ekapu! This has become my war! With the help of the gods, I shall fight it alone, and win! (To officer) Make ready a canoe.

(Exit officer.)

# HALEMANO

I was a fool not to sense how much the man hated me. ~~What was I to him but an unworthy lay fellow strutting in priestly headgear, masquerading in borrowed holiness!~~ Poor sacred wretch! To desert his king and his temple. A traitor, ~~fleeing, fleeing, fleeing, already on the go.~~ Poor wretch, once sacred. I would have waged war at the command of my king. Launched a war fleet, mustered champions, ~~fought with the expected pomp and might!~~ Now, I shall wage my own kind of war, single-handed, and yet without mercy. ~~Tearing with my own hands the fat foe to shreds. Such shreds that not enough of him shall be left to be a fit offering before the gods.~~ (To women) With Kamalalawalu in the reach of 'A'ekapu how could I delay! A hundred warships launched tomorrow would be too late. My war starts now. Grandmother, sister, I am sailing for Puna. When I return it will be with my Kamalalawalu. She'll have for a sitting mat the skin of King 'A'ekapu. And we will play checkers with his sliced bones for pawns. I so swear! ~~(Softly) We three love her.~~

(Exit Halemano.)

(A pause. Laenihi rises.)

# LAENIHI

(Lightly) Feather cloaks and helmets, spears and war clubs, how awesome! And now a ~~distraught~~ <sup>lover</sup> lover sailing to rout a whole army of enemy champions and ~~to~~ destroy single-handed

their king! Things being as they are, my poor magic, or what remains of it, may prove handy. (*Chants her bird call*)

*Pueo - e, pueo - e.*

*Pueo e pili i ka ua.*

*Pueo i kanikani i ka ua.*

*E - pueo! E - pueo!*

(*Off stage, the hooting of an owl.*)

LAENIHI

Farewell, Granny. Despite his trappings, his love and his courage, Halemano needs me. And Kamalalawalu needs me most of all. ~~If I succeed, I should reach the coast of Puna before brother does. Perhaps even ahead of Kamalalawalu!~~ (*Laughs*) Or else dive from high, deep down, down into the shark-infested seas. Aloha!

(*Exit Laenihi. Left alone, Kaukaali'i gestures a silent and nearly resigned "auwe."*)





Forest segment of circular set -  
Semi-light but strong light on  
blue strip behind trees  
that stands for ocean

## ACT TWO

*SCENE 2: A hala grove by the sea. Coast of Puna, Hawaii. It is the forest that Halemano and Kamalalawalu shared in dreams. Bone-white crooked trunks of dead hala trees with aerial roots and shoots hanging vertically. Instead of leaves a parasite growth hangs down, stalactite-like, similar to Spanish moss. For underbrush, giant ferns open their trellised umbrellas. Black glossy boulders, with patches of russet-colored moss.*

*Perceived through the maze of branches, the sea. The moonlight makes it glow milk-white. Starry sky.*

*The rebel band is in the process of breaking camp. Weapons, oars, and bundles are strewn about. Lighted torches propped upright between rocks.*

*Kamalalawalu sits on a low stone, hands bound together. She is coarsely wrapped in tapa of the texture and color of gummy sack. Her head is down, dejectedly resting on her bound hands. She is disheveled. No leis.*

### HIGH PRIEST

*(Good-humoredly)* Truly a swift passage. How quickly we outdistanced that lone pursuer. Hardly had he started that he sank beyond that horizon that forever hides from us things better left behind. ~~No canoe-man-made and man-manned will overtake us now.~~ We are safe at last! *(A look at Kamalalawalu)* Why kings should be at odds over a girl baffles

me. Spears and daggers are sharpened. Taunts are rehearsed. Champions train. Temple offerings are proffered. Omens ~~are~~ sought. Tomorrow, strong men shall die. And all for what? For the chunk of flesh that quivers inside that sacking, hardly worth its weight in dog meat. Once our prisoner in 'A'ekapu's hands, hotheads are bound to cool off. The whole silly clamor will be stilled, the quarrel ended, peace sought. Both sides should feel grateful for my bold initiative. They shall still acclaim us as heroes!

*(Kamalalawalu lifts her head, pushing back with bound hands her fallen hair. Her features are revealed. Her eyes are closed.)*

#### KAMALALAWALU

I am cold.

*(A priest picks a tapa sheet from a bundle, holds it open at Kamalalawalu's back.)*

#### PRIEST

Local peasants may not be as immune to her looks as is Your Venerability

#### HIGH PRIEST

True. Better keep her features hid as we proceed inland.

*(Priest throws tapa over Kamalalawalu's head, careful that it covers her face.)*

#### HIGH PRIEST

As for us, let us change to less conspicuous clothing. Pity it has to be tapa of a common kind.

*(Garments are unwrapped.)*

#### HIGH PRIEST

Awkward that the new lord of our choice be far from devout, ~~and not even an unbeliever of the better sort, crafty enough to realize how solid a hold sacrifices and ceremonies claim over the vulgar.~~ The wealth of a kingdom, so states our new lord, 'A'ekapu, is based on menial labor exclusively. This side of the seas, ~~our colleagues~~ officiate no more. They

*priest*

now farm or fish. (*Looks at his hands*) How smooth. How sophisticate. Calluses should never mar their beauty. To this end, Kamalalawalu, weak flesh though she is, may prove a potent argument in a barter. ~~[We shall see. Now]~~ let us change. We will be farmers. ~~Weapons are then out of character.~~ We should hide our surplus stores where no spy may find them. [ J

*(Carrying weapons, oars, and bundles, the men exit behind rocks. Kamalalawalu is left alone. Enter Laenihi, cautiously. Hoots softly. Kamalalawalu raises her head, lifting back with bound hands the sacking over her features. She sees Laenihi, and helplessly raises her roped wrists. From a distance, Laenihi signals. Kamalalawalu opens wide her arms. Ropes and sacking fall at her feet as she rises.)*

#### LAENIHI

(*Gaily*) My magic never felt in better shape. Owl is a dear. I didn't even wet my feet. As for these evil men, though they do not know it, they landed just where the gods wished them to land. Friends of yours live close by, Kamalalawalu. Your two old nurses. Their hut is just a little way down this path.

#### KAMALALAWALU

(*Claps hands*) Dear, dear grannies.

#### LAENIHI

This forest, it is ~~not just another forest,~~ but truly a sacred grove. It is said that when gods choose to visit our earth, this ~~hala forest~~ is their favorite landing spot.

#### KAMALALAWALU

(*Looks around*) I know this grove well. ~~[I have been here more than once even though I never left my sheltered cavern.]~~ Indeed, these bone-white crooked trunks, these giant ferns, these mossy black rocks, how could I ever mistake them. It is our dream forest, the forest that Halemano and I shared! O Laenihi! I now know for sure that should I call [ J



him, "Halemano! Halemano!" seawise, faraway, through the branches, I shall pick out the scarlet note of his feather cloak and soon after I shall be in his arms.

LAENIHI

Shush! Don't call! No use alerting your captors. They are not what one would call friendly.

*(Off stage, a rustling noise.)*

LAENIHI

Straight down this path, their hut. The old ones await you.

*(Kamalalawalu hesitates. Laenihi both hugs her and pushes her out.)*

LAENIHI

Quick, fear not ~~for me. I have a plan.~~ Remember, I am a witch!

*(Exit Kamalalawalu. Laenihi takes her place. She quickly wraps herself inside the sacking, pulling it low over head and features. She gives a twist to the rope to secure it at her wrists. Then, sits down, head dejectedly held between her seemingly bound hands.)*

*(The men return. They are rid of oars, weapons, and bundles. They have changed to dun-colored loincloths and coarse tapa wraps. They unfasten the torches to take them along.)*

HIGH PRIEST

On our way. ~~We will travel light.~~ From now on we are peaceable folks bringing a gift for our king. And let no one look at the prisoner. Better she should remain faceless until brought before 'A'ekapu.

*(A priest tightens the sacking over Laenihi's head. Another gives a tug at the end of the rope at her wrists. Laenihi rises, stumblingly she follows her captors. All exit.)*

*(Kamalalawalu's old nurses enter. That is, they cautiously peek from behind a rock. Emboldened, they enter on tiptoe, making heavy use of their canes. They are dressed as they were in Act I, Scene 2. They carry in their arms fine tapa garments, dyed a deep purple. Thrown over their forearms, fresh leis of entwined hala and lehua. Further investigation.)*

OLD WOMAN I

What evil-looking fellows! To think our little goddess was at their mercy. It gives one the shivers.

OLD WOMAN II

All's right that ends well. Our baby is back with us and safe.

OLD WOMAN I

How we wept. How we waited. ~~[It was our king's command though.]~~ Back we went to roasting bananas by the roadside! We liked the old king so much more. The young king, he is such a hard one to take to. C  
J

OLD WOMAN II

So imperious, so greedy. And the things he ~~has to say~~<sup>S/</sup> about the gods! Truly, the world is going to the dogs.

*(They signal. Kamalalawalu enters.)*

OLD WOMAN I

*(To Kamalalawalu.)* Sit down, dearest, and first we'll tidy you up a bit. Then you can tell us what happened. ~~Then, if you want, you'll eat and drink.~~

*(Kamalalawalu sits down. The two women wrap her in fresh tapa, do her hair, adorn her with the leis they brought. As they work, they talk.)*

OLD WOMAN II

You look a fright, lovely. Did you know the king got in a tantrum? He said you fooled him and that you would suffer for it. He ~~has~~ everybody looking for you everywhere. ~~Not a trace of you.~~ h3)

OLD WOMAN I

OLD WOMAN II  
Where did you hide?

KAMALALAWALU *stayed in*  
I was off to Maui. I ~~went to~~ Hana.

OLD WOMAN II I  
Come, come, dearest. ~~[There was not time enough to sail that far and back.]~~ You should tell the truth to your old grannies.

OLD WOMAN II  
We can keep a secret, you know. *OLD WOMAN I* Even from our king.

KAMALALAWALU *Hana*  
Laenihi was with me. *That's where we were, grannies, Hana.* ~~We were so tired that night,~~ we slept in a fisherman's cove.

OLD WOMAN II  
*[Maybe then. It is.]* ~~Laenihi~~ *who* told us you were coming. What is she, that one, anyhow? An owl? A fish? A girl?

KAMALALAWALU *OLD WOMAN II*  
Laenihi is a witch and I love her. I love her best, next to my Halemano.

OLD WOMAN I *OLD WOMAN II*  
We love her too, dearest, if you do. There, you look a little better ~~[already.]~~ What about this Halemano?

KAMALALAWALU *OLD WOMAN I*  
Halemano is simply the most wonderful man in the world. As yet, I ~~have~~ never met him otherwise than in my dreams. They were such dreamy ones too. ~~[I hated every moment I had to stay awake because it meant I was away from him. I knew it, grandmothers, when you tried to awake me, and you pinched me, and you slapped me, and you bathed me. Also I knew that the moment I would open my eyes the one I love would vanish, and our dear forest, too.]~~ *Our forest,* it was just like this one, with its crooked white trunks, its ferns, and its rocks. ~~[Only, its echoes repeated over and over~~

*The forest we met in*

again either his dear name or mine, and ~~reverberated the~~ L 3  
~~sound of his footsteps. I made you sad, grannies, I know.~~  
~~I was sad too when~~ One awful night my dreams became empty  
of him, our forest mourned his absence! I was ready to  
die. Then ~~Laenihi came and took me to him, but he was~~  
~~gone!~~ (Looks around) I am happy now though, because I  
know that soon I will be with him. This is the clearing where  
we always meet. met  
~~I am glad I was violently taken away and~~  
~~so roughly handled.~~ Of course, my Halemano ~~has already~~  
~~left his island to come and rescue me.~~ He'll kill all those  
bad men, and we shall be happy forever ~~and ever~~.

OLD WOMAN II

Of course he will, dear, and you shall. ~~Our baby, so pret-~~  
~~ty, so lovely, so tabooed.~~ Love forever, love for keeps, is  
what her lot shall be. To be a queen is far from good enough  
for her. OLD WOMAN I  
OLD WOMAN II

OLD WOMAN I

Gossip has it that just when our king hugged you in his ma-  
jestic embrace, you vanished! Quite a trick.

OLD WOMAN II

Handy too. Ancient as I am ~~and born a commoner~~, I doubt  
I would much enjoy such a royal embrace.

OLD WOMAN I

Sleep soundly, sister, our king shall not awake you. Or if  
he does, it shall be to lay you gently on a bed of banana  
leaves, as a sacred offering.

OLD WOMAN II

Nasty sister! ~~Nasty you!~~ OLD WOMAN I

KAMALALAWALU

Grandmothers, grandmothers, behave. And stop pulling my  
hair. It hurts. If you behave, I'll tell you more secrets a-  
bout my Halemano.

OLD WOMAN I

We'll be good. We promise.

## OLD WOMAN II

Tell us, lei of my heart.

*(Out of the brush, silently Halemano enters. He comes from the beach, ducking under low branches on his way. He is in a red cloak and helmet, and holds a spear. The old women see him as he emerges from the brush. He puts a finger to his lips, meaningfully. They nod imperceptibly.)*

## KAMALALAWALU

You do, don't you, grannies, want to hear secrets about my Halemano?

BOTH OLD WOMAN I

Of course, dearest, of course.

*(Halemano approaches stealthily, stands directly behind Kamalalawalu, spear held vertically.)*

## KAMALALAWALU

Grannies, I hate him. He is a horrible fellow. What was our beautiful forest without him. Its white trunks felt like crooked bones. Its black boulders smelled like funerary bundles. And when I shivered with fright in the ghostly moonlight I would call him and call him, but it was all in vain. He had no right not to be there. Where was he, I ask you, when he was not in my dreams?

## OLD WOMAN II

Call him just once more. <sup>OLD WOMAN I</sup> One never knows.

*(Old women back away discreetly.)*

## KAMALALAWALU

*(A sort of yodeling call to reach a great distance)* Halemano!

## HALEMANO

*(Softly)* Silly. You don't have to shout.

*(Exit old women on tiptoe. From time to time one shall see their heads bobbing, peeking from behind rocks.)*

*(Kamalalawalu, seated, does not turn around. Halemano props his spear against a boulder and enfolds her from behind in his feather cloak. Still without turning, she raises her arms up to his shoulders and pulls him down to his knees, until his cheek is against her cheek. A pause.)*

KAMALALAWALU

I hate you. Truly I hate you. You know what I wished you would have done, Halemano. ~~I wanted you to cross the ocean, all by yourself, alone in a small canoe.~~ I wished so hard *and so long* for you to land here. I wanted you to kill single-handed all these bad men, and then to rescue me.

HALEMANO

~~I crossed the ocean just as you wished, Kamalalawalu.~~ Only it seems now that you don't need rescuing any more. ~~May-be you do.~~ Where are these evil men?

KAMALALAWALU

~~I changed my mind.~~ No, *Now* I don't want you to be a hero any more.

HALEMANO

Why not?

KAMALALAWALU

It's dangerous, silly. ~~If you were dead,~~ how could you make love to me. Maybe after we live together a long, long time. Maybe after we have many, many children. Then maybe I'll ~~allow you to go~~ *let you* be a hero, and maybe not.

HALEMANO

A cogent argument. ~~Too bad my mind is made up, my Kamalalawalu.~~ Now that you are in my arms, ~~[not a dream, but flesh, not a spirit only, but also a body]~~ I know with absolute knowledge that it is better for me to lose you than to be unworthy of you. I am ~~dead~~ set on being a hero. Yes, before we can relax for keeps on our cozy mat and enjoy homely chores, I shall tidy up what loose ends there are to our story. How did you escape?

*Love*

KAMALALAWALU  
Laenihi took my place.

HALEMANO  
There you are. Quite a loose end. ~~It is a task made to order.~~ I shall go rescue our Laenihi.

KAMALALAWALU  
(In a soft voice) Do.

*(Halemano opens his cloak to its full span, freeing Kamalalawalu. Swiftly, she rises and turns around, throws her arms about his neck. A strong embrace.)*

KAMALALAWALU  
Promise you won't get hurt.

HALEMANO  
I promise.

*(He picks up his spear. Exits. Re-enter old women. Kamalalawalu rushes to their arms, sobbing.)*

*Both* <sup>E</sup> OLD WOMAN ~~X~~  
(Patting her) There, there, poppet.







canoe portion of circular set  
in  $\frac{3}{4}$  view -  
light scaffolding for workers  
at beginning scene -

At cut, scaffolding gone,  
only the canoe, strip of gauze  
with moving blue light  
to suggest floating on ocean.  
Main light on 'army'  
on upper bridge,

## ACT TWO

**SCENE 3:** A royal shipyard. Maui. A giant double canoe is in the making, in shape not unlike a present day catamaran. The twin hulls are seen in front view, propped in dry-dock fashion by wooden buttresses. Their twin prows rise high, curved like the tusks of a giant boar. The ship's bridge is set between the hulls. It is a wide platform lashed to arched beams. The beams in turn are lashed to both hulls. The whole understructure of the bridge curves like the vaulted ceiling of a Romanesque crypt.

Scattered at all levels, craftsmen work at their varied crafts. Carpenters shape timber with adzes. Painters, using mops of dried hala fiber, coat the hulls up to the waterline. Ropemakers twist twine into rope and lash the bridge's beams to hull and platform. This background action should be rather in the manner of a pantomime, its noises minimized, its gestures stylized.

Center mid-ground, WORKMAN I piles sticks in a net that WORKMAN II, squatting at the edge of the platform, hauls up at the end of a rope. As they work, they talk.

### WORKMAN I

Seems to me this craft is too heavy to float. Unless the great fish-god, Kalanuiakane, puts his fin underneath and gives it a push!

## WORKMAN II

Well, our king is pious enough to deserve a good turn from the gods. No war was ever started with so much praying, so much chanting, and so little ~~of any other kind of~~ preparation. It would take a month ~~more~~ at least before our ships could ~~be launched.~~ *sail* - *war*

## WORKMAN I

Within a week the ~~war~~ fleet of 'A'ekapu will have crossed the sea channel. His soldiers will be swarming all over this shipyard, putting our beautiful handicraft to the torch!

## WORKMAN II

Unless our fat foe prefers to brand us as his slaves. Then he could force us to finish the job for himself. What splendour war-spoils our ten giant ships would make. ~~He could sail them back to Puna in triumph. Puna would truly become invincible.~~

## WORKMAN I

Our beloved little king. Ill luck ~~seems the sole~~ answer to his prayers. Like that commander in chief he picked. ~~With his own royal hand~~ he invests him with his own royal cloak and command. The chiefs pay obeisance. The priests pay obeisance. King goes to chapel. When he comes out, both commander in chief and high priest are ~~gone. Nowhere to be found!~~ --- *refuse!*

## WORKMAN II

~~For sure they are not on this island.~~ Some say spies for 'A'ekapu kidnapped them both. Some say both ~~of them~~ deserted.

## WORKMAN I

Hush! Brawn is what they expect of us, not talk. ~~When at war I say obey orders and keep your mouth shut.~~

## WORKMAN II

*(Has unloaded net on platform. Now he lowers it empty by bailing out rope)* Pass me another batch of sticks. I'll need them to smooth over the cracks.

*(An old woman enters. Violet-colored wrap, be-draggled and burned in places. A scarlet scarf knotted awry at her scrawny neck. Hanging from her shoulders, an open lei of ohelo berries. In her hand a crooked staff. A tapa-wrapped bundle swings at her back. It is Pele. She looks at the work in progress, lowers her load to the ground, and squats in a corner unconcernedly.)*

WORKMAN I *comes*

Here she ~~is~~ again, the old lady. What's in her sack this time?

WORKMAN II

Funny. Canoemaking hardly looks like her trade. Yet we never saw her before we started work on these ships.

WORKMAN I

Old folks are funny that way. Maybe she lost a son ~~in the~~ *at sea* navy.

*(Pele unties her bundle. Out of it she takes some laulaus, individual food portions wrapped in ti leaves.)*

PELE

*(In a peddler's singsong call)* Succulent taro. Succulent taro, cooked with lovely tender puppy flesh. Roasted to a delight! *(Spoken)* Come, lads, you'll need strength to finish that piece of work!

*(Some of the workmen stop their work and gather about her.)*

WORKMAN I

What barter, old lady? What do you want for it?

PELE

*(Placidly)* Nothing. Help yourselves, my lads.

*(Workmen help themselves. All join in.)*

## WORKMAN II

Let's go in the shade and eat.

*(All exit. But for Pele the shipyard is deserted.)*

*(Up on the ship's platform, peeking over its ledge, a "man." One sees his head and shoulders. His hands grasp at the edge of the platform. It is Kamapua'a, in black feather cloak and helmet. His skin glows unnaturally.)*

## KAMAPUA'A

*(A grunt.)*

## PELE

*(Hardly glancing at him)* I knew you'd come! ~~Of what use is a disguise if you must hang around me like that.~~ I look good enough to pass for an old woman. In fact, today, I am an old woman. But look at you. What do you think you are, shining like a sunset or an afterglow, with a skin like a kukui-nut oil lamp on a dark night. You a man! Tcha, you give the show away.

## KAMAPUA'A

Your own usual amiable self, red-eyed crone. Why do I feel friendly toward you? The attraction of contraries, I guess. Beloved sister-in-law, I am here for the very same reason ~~that~~ you are. Because I am proud of the what-is-it I begot, my ~~little~~ Kamalalawalu. Because I refuse to see her unhappy. Because the family honor is at stake or, shall we say, the good name of the gods. And because daughter, having had the bad taste to fall in love with an idiot--I mean a hero--it is for us to see that no ~~lasting~~ harm comes to either of them.

## PELE

Do it for love of that little one then. I have my own reasons. If there is a type I despise, it is men who pretend we do not exist. That so-called king, 'A'ekapu, he makes me feel hot all over. ~~Much as I loathe happy endings, I shall see to it that this story gets one.~~ The boy wants the girl. The girl wants the boy. 'A'ekapu wants the girl. I better keep an eye on this 'A'ekapu.

## KAMAPUA'A

We work together then, knock-kneed witch. I, for love.  
You, for spite.

*(Without rising, Kamapua'a slides backward away from the platform's edge and out of sight. Workmen come back from lunch.)*

## WORKMAN I

*(Wiping his mouth. To Pele)* Thanks, grandmother. That was good.

## WORKMAN II

Sure was. If this ship ever floats, we'll give you a ride. Thanks.

*(Workmen go back to work.)*

*(Enter King Kapulua and his retinue. The royal feather cloak and helmet, both red, are cut to fit his small size. Correspondingly small is his war club. In contrast, his chiefs and champions are all big men. They, too, are in full war array, including oversized war clubs.)*

## KING

Poor noble Halemano. At the news of the kidnapping, a sort of frenzy overcame him. ~~He commandeered a small racing craft, manned by unarmed oarsmen.~~ *Armed with a single spear* With one spear, he started for Puna to do battle single-handed against the ~~hordes of champions.~~ *voiled* King 'A'ekapu musters. ~~Much as the gods may love our Halemano, of course he will lose both his girl and his life!~~ Now the defense of the kingdom rests again with me. We shall make our stand directly on the beach. *(Surveys work in progress)* Ten such warships in the making, and not a single one as yet seaworthy ~~[or war-worthy]~~ I wished to launch them all at once, to anchor them side by side, an impregnable wall of defense jutting far out to sea. Invaders were to be met, and struck, and sunk, before they could even begin to scar my land and to maim my beloved commoners. ~~These giant war canoes, they meant for me and mine so much more than power and glory. They were~~ *on the high seas*

to be a royal pledge of peaceful pursuits.] Facts will be very different from my wish. <sup>our</sup> ~~Drunk with potential war foot,~~ <sup>on land</sup> ~~'ekapu has long held his fleet at the ready, provisioned and fully manned. Any moment now, they may set sail this way.~~ The war will be fought here. <sup>^</sup> ~~Not only~~ my soldiers, chiefs, and champions, ~~but, alas,~~ <sup>beloved</sup> my farmers and fishermen ~~too,~~ they'll die or be enslaved.

<sup>all</sup> (Up to now Pele has squatted unconcerned. Now she gathers the last of the laulau, gets up, bent over her stick. She walks to the king. A kneeling prostration, holding both hands raised toward him, the laulau in her open palms. King and courtiers take routine notice. An attendant receives the gift, shows it to the king. King nods. Attendant takes the gift away.)

KING

(Gently) Madam, thank you. Rise. . .

(Pele rises, leaning on stick.)

KING

. . . and state your petition. Have I wronged you in person or through one of my officers? Are you in need?

PELE

(Matter-of-factly) You are in need.

KING

True, how true. Vast though our power be, there is ~~always~~ need for more. Or else, to face defeat, not in single combat but through the scaling of a cliff-wall made of the flesh of devoted subjects. <sup>You see</sup> ~~A shame and sorrow harder to consider than is bodily death.~~ ~~To be the king of a kingdom soon to be breached.~~ Indeed, my need is grievous.

PELE

(Straightens up a bit. More authority in her voice) State your need.

KING

(Patiently) As you talk, Madam, I hardly remember who is the king and who <sup>is</sup> the petitioner. To men, I am a king.

But also I am a beggar, begging redress from my gods with not even a small packet of food in hand to propitiate them. Thank you, Madam, for sharing, however fleetingly, my ache. Neither you nor I know how to cure it.

PELE

*(Upright stance. With full authority)* Nevertheless, state your need.

*(The courtiers now sense unearthly power in the old woman. They back away from her, shielding themselves behind the king. The king himself seems unaware of change.)*

KING

Great kings have great needs, Madam. Were my ten warships afloat my armies would invade 'A'ekapu's kingdom. My people would be spared much looting and death, much sorrow. Alas! My fleet is far from ready. The enemy's is ~~ready~~. This war shall be fought here at home.

PELE

You are a good king, King. Even in this moment of stress ~~and anguish~~ you took time to humor the vagaries of an old woman. I thank you. *(Pele raises her stick held in both hands, horizontally pointing towards the ship. In a strong voice)* Petition granted.

*(Immediately the entire stage is in absolute darkness. Thunderclaps are heard, out of which there emerges an undercurrent of martial music, blending drums and shell trumpets. When the light returns the ship is still there, but it is at sea. The ocean has risen to the waterline of the hull. On the blue sea foreground and overhead in the sky, ever changing streaks of light in motion. On the twin hulls, on the beams and the underside of the bridge, swiftly moving pinpoints of light as if reflected from the crest of waves. Everywhere moving lights evoke a ship in full motion. The ship is manned. What were once buttresses have become oars. Oarsmen in calabash helmets paddle rhythmically. At the top of the bridge, stand-*



ing in a V-wedge formation, an army. Center forward, poised at the tip of the wedge, Kamapua'a in his black feather cloak and helmet, his metallic skin glowing. In one hand he holds a staff topped with the vermillion feather-mask of the war-god. In his other hand a giant war club. At his side, also in full war array, the little king. In recession, completing the two wings of the wedge, chiefs and champions. Behind this wedge made of standing warriors, feathered kahili standards and many upright spears suggest an immense army. Backed by strong off-stage music of drums and conches, all chant a martial hymn.)

He la koa, he la he'e. *A day forward, for upset*  
 He la malu nei, O Kapulua! *K. will have peace*  
 A make akula 'oe ia Kuika'a.  
 Ia Ho'oka'a, ia Ka'akua, ia Ka'aala.  
 E 'ike auanei 'oe i ka nao ho'opa'i a Malailua.  
 I ka la'au e wali ai ko papa 'auwae.  
 I 'oki ai o ka nao ho'opa'i.  
 E 'iki auane'i 'apopo.  
 I ka moa i hanai 'ia i ka la *The wester makes the sun rise*  
 A pu'upu'u ka lepo. *scatches the dirt;*  
 A 'aka'aka'a ka hulu. *his feathers rise*  
 Me he moa kau i ka uwahi *The dust rises*  
 A eina ka hulu.  
 Ho'okahi no pekuna a ka moa mahi la *A single hawk*  
 Puko a, puko a. *A champion's kick Does it.*  
 He la koa, he la he'e.  
 He la malu nei, O Kapulua!

(Toward the end of the chant the strong light dims to a blood-red glow.)





Same segment of set as  
Act I, sc. 4 - changes:  
mostly elaborate carpet (mat)  
covering platform and coming  
forward at right angle to stage

## ACT TWO

**SCENE 4:** *The inner court of King 'A'ekapu's disaffected temple, Puna, Hawaii. Thatched buildings close the court at both sides. At the back, the court abuts a raised area of piled-up lava blocks, smoothed over on top. Built on this platform, a hut and a tower. The tower is in the background, set to one side. Its open scaffold is toppling, its platforms bare of sacrifices. A few shreds of ceremonial tapa still cling to it. The hut is centered. Half-crumbling and shorn of much thatching, it reveals its skeleton of lashed poles. Outside the hut, rows of god-sticks have been uprooted. They are piled in disorder, like firewood. Blatant symbols of 'A'ekapu's temporal power contrast with this spiritual decay. On the roof of the hut, deployed flat to a full half-circle, the royal cloak made of lemon-yellow feathers. A brand new royal mat runs center along the depth of the stage. It starts on the upper level at the door of the hut, hangs vertically down the thickness of the raised area, and, foreground, carpets a pathway in front of the royal stand.*

*On the mat, directly before the hut, King 'A'ekapu is squatting, holding court. He is dressed with wide yellow-green malo, ornaments and leis as in Act I, Scene 2, and holds a spear.*

*Behind him, in wedge formation, four queens, equally fat. Patterned voluminous tapa skirts and yellow-green scarves. From their shoulders hang short yellow-green feather capes. Crew-cut hair. Small head-leis of lemon-yellow feathers.*

*Whale-tooth necklaces. For accessories, either a fly-switch or a plaited fan.*

*Deployed in two wings at both sides of the royal group, courtiers, kanili-bearers, and servants, including spittoon-bearer and drink steward. Farther out, drummers.*

*On the lower level, two rows of men face each other across the width of the stage. One row is of champions, in short yellow-green feather capes and helmets, and armed with spears. The men facing them are dressed in ceremonially high malos, similar to that worn by the king. Each man wears, asymmetrically disposed, an armlet and a legging of dogs' teeth. In both hands are coconut rattles topped with panaches of feathers. As the scene opens both rows of men are seen in profile, heads turned sideways toward the king.*

*King 'A'ekapu is concluding a speech, at the same time that he is being given a lomilomi, or massage. Two young girls, rather slight, are massaging the king. They are dressed in common dun-colored tapa. On the upper level where the king is seated, one girl massages his arms, one at a time. Whichever arm is left free waves the spear to underline the royal oratory. From the lower level, the other girl massages the king's calves and feet. After one leg has been vigorously rubbed, the king folds it sideways, buddha-wise, and dangles the other over the ledge to be massaged in its turn.*

#### **'A'EKAU**

*. . . and so it goes, my champions. Our enemy wasted his efforts and his substance on irrelevant ceremonies, divinations, conjurations, stargazing, and the like. Their so-called war preparations were spent in idle and decorative gestures.*

*(One arm has been massaged. The king changes his spear to that hand and the girl moves to massage the other. More spear-brandishing.)*

## 'A'EKAPU

What contrast with my own attitude and policies! Here, all my might and all my efforts have gone into the hewing, and the arming, and the launching of a powerful war fleet. ~~Thanks to my wise decisions,~~ the resources of the kingdom ceased to be diverted, ~~even imperceptibly,~~ to the coddling of seers, magicians, astrologers, vaticinators, and other ~~lazy~~ folks. *useless*

*(King stops. Spittoon-bearer rushes with spittoon, lifts cover. King spits noisily. Bearer covers spittoon, exits backward.)*

## 'A'EKAPU

Instead, I ordered our wealth channeled exclusively to benefit ~~the only ones who truly count in a war,~~ my weapon-makers, my canoe-hewers, my oarsmen, and you, my champions! Those who refuse to help, let them starve! And let them starve too, those who are unable to help!

*(A second stop. Drink steward rushes with cup. King drinks. Wipes mouth. Gives other leg to be massaged, and other arm. Back to spear-waving.)*

## 'A'EKAPU

~~As the fruit of my most constant foresight, today~~ we are at the eve of invading enemy seas and of searing enemy lands. My spies report that of the ten giant warships our foe foolishly hoped to launch, not even a single one is ~~ready~~! Thus it is obvious that they cannot ~~ever hope to attempt a landing or to meet us at sea.~~ All the war fleet they may muster at this stage will be made up of dispossessed fishing canoes! Pah! Our rock-hard decisions are already justified. The war then shall be brief and the enemy mercilessly destroyed. Ouch!

*(This to the girl who is doing his calf. Gives her a kick, not too gentle.)*

## 'A'EKAPU

Our ~~departure~~ shall be in itself a celebration! ~~Already~~ we can confidently call it a victorious departure, so assured is the coming annihilation of our foe.

*(The king is getting hoarse. Again drink steward proffers drink. King drinks. Spittoon-bearer offers spittoon. King spits.)*

#### 'A'EKAU

Tomorrow, the sight of our invincible might shall strike terror in the hearts of their watchers and stun into helplessness their quaking vanguards! My champions! As your fathers did before you, go into a martial dance! Whip yourselves to a tiptop of warring frenzy! Rejoice in our coming victory! Dance!

*(King claps hands. Drummers drum. Dancers make ready. A page offers the king a tapa towel. King dries his face, arms, and shoulders. For a while, as the dance proceeds, the massage will continue as follows: The king lies down on his belly and both girls, one on each side, knead vigorously his buttocks, back, and shoulders. About halfway through the dances the king signals the girls away. He then sits up. Through the rest of the dances, without raising themselves from their sitting position, 'A'ekapu and his queens hula flabbily to rhythm, and the courtiers echo their moves imperceptibly.*

*The dance begins. The two groups of dancers alternate. First the men in formal malo perform a hula, a manly one that includes jumping and stomping, horsetails flying. They rattle their coconut-rattles in circular motions that make the feather rosettes whirl. The rhythm of the dance is further underlined by the subdued drumming of the drummers from the raised platform, and a clapping of hands from the spearmen at rest. The dance over, the men re-form in a file, at rest.*

*Now the spearmen get into action. They form themselves in opposing squads and stage a mock battle that also is a dance. It includes postures of offense and defense, and grunts, shrieks, the knocking of spear against spear. As the spear-*

men dance, the drummers drum, and the men in malo, now at rest, accompany the dance with muffled rattlings.

From left foreground a messenger enters at a trot, turns center and kneels at the edge of the royal mat, just below the king. Messenger gestures his message as king hunches forward the better to hear. The moment the messenger enters, dance and music, without stopping outright, taper off. Another messenger enters right foreground. Same mimic from messenger and king.)

x and cease  
before as the king  
into speaking.

'A'EKAU

(To himself) Beyond belief! However, <sup>showed</sup> if even one of these two reports ~~should~~ prove true, my royal ~~time~~ <sup>pleasure</sup> will hardly be wasted. One at a time.

('A'ekapu signals to first messenger who exits at a trot. Signals to second messenger to remain where he is. Second messenger squats down. 'A'ekapu straightens up, claps hands. Dance and music stop abruptly. The men form themselves in two rows as they were at the beginning, heads again turned towards the king.)

'A'EKAU

(King turns towards dancers in high malos) Well danced. Back to the beach. Each one to his assigned task.

(Exit men in malos. Exit drummers.)

'A'EKAU

(To spearmen) Stay here, my champions. I will have use for you presently.

(Spearmen divide in two groups at the foot of the royal stand. From left enter, between guards, the group of priests, surrounding in their turn the veiled Laenih.)

renegade

'A'EKAU

(Formally) State your case.



*(Guards back away. High priest comes forward.  
A deep obeisance.)*

#### HIGH PRIEST

O great king, indeed invincible king, we come from the island of Maui and up to now were subjects of King Kapuloa. Having tired of his despised rule, we felt in our hearts an urge to change our allegiance to a wise, to a benevolent and an enlightened ruler. Having weighed all possibilities, it became obvious that you alone, O great king, were to be the ruler of our final choice. With great difficulties and no less hardships, leaving behind us what we loathed, we escaped in a swift canoe. Here we are at your feet, begging you to accept us as your loyal subjects and servants.

*(High priest and his men put knee to ground.)*

#### 'A'EKAU

Not bad. Indeed not badly stated. I agree with the wisdom of most of these observations. An ambiguous attitude though. Once a rebel, perhaps once again a rebel. Or worse, an informer. We shall see. Though made up as farmers, it is obvious that your calling was another. The present ~~trap-~~ <sup>beggarly</sup> ~~pings are but a disguise. Mind you, I still may take it at its~~ ~~face value.~~ <sup>an obvious</sup> Out with the fact! What was your true status?

#### HIGH PRIEST

*superstition* ~~Alas!~~ O wise ruler, progress, the shedding of antiquated ~~customs~~, these were things unheard of in our stagnant way of life. We abetted, if half-heartedly, some of its less enlightened features.

#### 'A'EKAU

Ably stated. Show me your hands.

*(High priest proffers hands.)*

#### 'A'EKAU

*hide* No calluses. I thought so. I detected in your manner, in your ~~accent~~, in your style of speech, a whiff of something that those under my rule have long ago wisely forgotten. You were priests?

*(High priest opens arms in silent acknowledgment.)*

'A'EKAPU

A wise admission. Now to the point. Your secrecy excited my guards. Your firmness in denying them access to your prisoner impressed them. What is this vaunted gift that you bring us as a token of your good faith and straight purpose? If only a woman, I must state that my kingdom boasts of ~~as many women as does your ex-kingdom. Indeed,~~ enough women to jade even a king's appetite.

HIGH PRIEST

Not any woman, O king. The woman!

'A'EKAPU

*(Excitedly)* Should it prove to be Kamalalawalu, you shall be rewarded. Nobility, lands, slaves, ~~fall you wish.~~ Your superstitious past shall be wiped out. A new life shall begin for you ~~basking in my favor!~~

HIGH PRIEST

*(Signals pompously)* Unveil her!

*(Two priests, with theatrical gesture fold back the tapa veil, uncovering Laenihi's face. Awed silence as 'A'ekapu scans her features. Then, with unexpected agility, the king rises up. In anger he raises over his head his spear held with both hands and, with a vicious downward stroke, breaks its shaft in two over his knee. Fury in his voice.)*

'A'EKAPU

This is not the woman. Slaves. Idiots. Did you for one moment imagine that you would fool this king! *(To guards)* Take these men away. If tomorrow they are still breathing, guards, you will die with them!

*(Stunned, then struggling in protest, the rebels exit, manhandled by the guards. Laenihi stands alone for a moment, taking in the scene, then backing stealthily away, exits left.)*

*prisoners*

*A servant offers the king a fresh spear.)*

'A'EKAPU

*(To waiting messenger, prodding him with the spear) Fetch your man. (To queens) And this time let us hope for a less boring turn of affairs.*

*(King sits down. He is out of breath. Servant offers him a tapa towel. King wipes with it his face, shoulders, and arms.)*

*(Enter Halemano. War array with spear. He comes in freely, walks to the front of the royal stand. Guards follow respectfully.)*

'A'EKAPU

*(His royal poise recovered) State your case.*

HALEMANO

I have invaded your kingdom, 'A'ekapu. You declared war on Maui. I am Halemano, Maui's champion. I shall try for victory by combat. Bring on your champions.

'A'EKAPU

So they told me. I could hardly believe it. Don't you know that to invade my kingdom one would need many war canoes, large ones and wide ones, long ones and short ones, canoes for provisions, canoe-loads of weapons, and canoe-loads of champions. Where are your canoes, your weapons, your champions? You are mistaken or mad. Go back to Maui. Tell your king what I have told you. ~~I then return with enough men and enough power to be a threat to 'A'ekapu. I promise that then battle shall be engaged, lands and men won or lost.~~ I may add that such a gesture as yours, if abetted by your king, comes embarrassingly close to an insult. Rather, have him send a thousand such as you, or better yet, ten thousand, ~~and we shall talk it over at that time.~~ Go!

HALEMANO

All rules of war have been observed, powerful one. Canoe landing, weapon wielding, challenge. As a king, you may refuse to do battle with me. But you shall not refuse to do

so as a man. Here goes my dare: Win Maui, I shall skin you alive, 'A'ekapu. I shall carve your bones into fish-hooks, and I shall grind into fishbait your guts!

*(Courtiers, servants, all present, sway in horror at what Halemano is saying. The frightened queens edge away from 'A'ekapu. Courtiers recede into background. In contrast, the champions, ranged at the foot of the royal stand, take one step forward, aggressively. 'A'ekapu is obviously disturbed. He looks right and left as if for some kind of reassurance. Ponders.)*

'A'EKAU

*(Smoothly)* Well spoken, if harshly. A true champion. A fearless champion. You and I then are at war, ~~looked in personal combat~~. As a king, though, you could hardly expect me to double dare your dare, or to defend with my own royal hands these threatened bones and guts. ~~Allow my champions to answer for me. Yes, my champions shall answer for me.~~

HALEMANO

First your champions. Then you. *(Describing a half circle by pointing his spear at the row of champions)* ~~To begin with,~~ which shall it ~~be~~ *be first?*

'A'EKAU

*(Evasive)* We sail at dawn. This is a busy day. ~~If you~~ should prove good at it, single combats could go on forever. ~~Our schedule of sailings and landings would lag. The pending invasion be postponed. Normally, we would observe all of the hallowed rules of war, antiquated as they may be. But~~ Today is such a special day, with every moment ~~of it~~ of such crucial import. *(Harshly)* None of my champions shall engage you first, Halemano. If you still feel warlike, engage them all at once.

*(Champions back one step and sway indecisively, between astonishment and shame.)*

HALEMANO

I shall take ~~you~~ *them* all at once, then, 'A'ekapu.

*(Spearmen turn uneasily toward the king to receive orders. He gestures in a wide half circle toward the front of the stage. Turning their backs on the spectators and facing the king, the spearmen arrange themselves stage foreground in two segments of a circle, leaving a clear view of the royal stand. Their spears are held at rest, vertically. The king now signals with downward gesture, thumb down.)*

**'A'EKAPU**

*(Viciously)* I want the kill to be right here. I want him killed right at my feet.

*(Obediently, Halemano takes his stand directly under the king. He turns his back on him and faces the spectators, both feet firmly planted on the royal mat. His spear set vertically in front of him, grasped at mid-shaft with both hands. Queens, courtiers, with a feeling of shame, edge their way toward the wings.)*

**'A'EKAPU**

Rules: At the first "Tzah!" all stand at the ready. At the second "Tzah!" all strike! *(He packs the expletive with savage intensity. Gaily)* My brand new mat shall be stained ~~and ruined~~. But the game shall be worth it! Tzah!

*(The spearmen raise their spears to a near-horizontal, their points aimed straight at Halemano's heart. The king rises stealthily. He bends forward, legs apart, his spear held at a near-vertical directly behind Halemano, ready to strike him unaware. Halemano does not move.)*

**A CHAMPION**

*(To Halemano, in desperate caution)* Take your stance! At least take your stance!

**HALEMANO**

*(Does not move)* This shall be my stance.

*(Through this exchange, both king and champions have slackened their own postures.)*

'A'EKAU

*(Intense peevishness)* What difference does it make! Another such delay and more blood than Halemano's shall be shed. Now we have to start all over again. Tzah!

*(Spearmen and king again are at the ready. Halemano does not move.)*

'A'EKAU

Tzah!

*(The spearmen shuttle their spears back to gather momentum for the forward throw. The king shuttles his spear up to increase the strength of its downward thrust. In that short moment, Halemano, without loosening his hold on the spear's shaft, raises both arms violently. His spear describes a short backward arc and embeds itself in 'A'ekapu's belly. The king drops his spear and shrieks a single agonized shriek. Grasping with both hands the protruding shaft, he crumples and falls down upon Halemano, who has flattened himself against the ledge. Both men go down the mat, as the spearmen throw their spears belatedly and in disorder. Halemano rises from behind 'A'ekapu's body, which rolls forward inert along the royal mat.)*

*(Queens, courtiers, and servants, all have disappeared.)*

HALEMANO

*(To champions)* My quarrel was with your king.

*(The champions kneel dumbly. Halemano bends over 'A'ekapu's body and unties its whale-tooth necklace. He rises.)*

*(A commotion off stage. Trampings of feet, shouts, conch-trumpet alarms. At both levels of*

*the set, people in a panic enter from left at a run, exit right. From left foreground, enter King Kapulooa with his retinue. War array.)*

KING

How we got here, I know not. All was swept before us as ~~if~~ we rode the crest of a giant tidal wave.

*(Halemano goes to Kapulooa. A deep obeisance.)*

HALEMANO

Forgive my sailing without leave, O lord! There was no time to explain.

*(Hands 'A'ekapu's necklace to Kapulooa. Now the king takes in the scene, as, background, spear-men wrap up 'A'ekapu's body in the royal mat and carry it silently off stage.)*

KING

*(Holds the necklace in front of him at arm's length)* Truly the gods were with our Halemano. *(Ties necklace around Halemano's neck)* The kingdom of Puna shall be yours, King Halemano. May both our kingdoms live in peace.

*(Enter Laenihi and Kamalalawalu, holding hands. The two old nurses follow. Laenihi is still in her sacking. Kamalalawalu is beautifully groomed, just as Halemano had seen her in his dreams.)*

KING

And here comes your queen.

*(Laenihi hugs Halemano. Halemano embraces Kamalalawalu, enfolding her in his cloak. A pause. Kapulooa gently taps Halemano on the shoulder.)*

KING

*homa*  
I must sail ~~back~~ now. Before I go, as king to king, a word of advice.

*Not letting go of the girl (Halemano half turns his head toward Kapulooa.)*

KING [Pointing to tower.]  
Your temple is in shocking disrepair.

HALEMANO

It shall be made just like new. (*Goes back to Kamalaluwa-*  
*lu.*)

*All others exit.*





Same as prologue,  
rosy light -

## EPILOGUE

*A lava pit, same set as Prologue. There is a change of color and mood, however. Mauves and pinks have replaced the fiery reds that were key color notes of the first set. The lava glow is rose rather than ruby-red. The sky, pink at bottom, turns at top to tender blue.*

*Pele, right, busies herself stringing a lei of yellow lehua blossoms. Instead of wine-colored, her wrap is "shocking pink." Her scarf is lemon yellow. Her hair is tidily gathered at the back.*

*Left, Hi'iaka's two sisters dressed in a paler shade of pink, also stringing yellow leis. The song they sing is the same one they sang in the Prologue, but the rhythm, that was that of a square dance, acquires refinements that mellow its rough impact. The sisters sway softly as they sing.*

### SISTERS

*Ho'okomo a'e i loko*

*A mau na pu'u*

*E 'ola'ola nei.*

*E kulipe'e nui! E 'ai-honua!*

*E Pele! E Pele!*

*Hua'ina. Hua'ina.*

*Ku 'ia ka lani!*

*Pae ka uvila!*

*E kulipe'e nui! E Pele!*

## PELE

(Claps hands) Shut up, sisters!

(Sisters stop singing and giggle instead.)

## PELE

We'll have to fit new words to the old tune, that's for sure. Storms, lightning, earthquakes are all very well. And that mention of me as the devourer of the earth, very apt, indeed, very apt. That is, if one is in the mood for stories of blood and thunder. Now that I have these grandnephews and nieces on my mind, I am not sure I like my sisters to sing songs and chant chants fit to scare the little ones. Try something ~~else~~ *softer*

(Sisters giggle. They sing another song. Its rhythm is soft and airy. As they sing, Pele nods in tune and even hums.)

## SISTERS

Kau ana ka la. E kau ana. *The sun has risen.*  
 Kau ana ke aloha i ku'u maka, *Risen the love in my*  
 Ke ho'oluhi nei i ku'u kino, *stirred my body* *eyes*  
 Ke lalawe nei i ku'u 'ao'ao. *The thrill inside*  
 Aloha ka ukana a ke aloha la. *The heart of the love!*  
 He waimaka - e! *A tear drops!*

## PELE

(Wiping a tear) To long for love, to cry for love, to ache for a lover, to love and be loved, yes that's better. I like that song.

(Sisters giggle.)

## PELE

I know. I know what you think, sisters. It happened to Hi'iaka all right. That pig-eyed god came and snatched her away. Each one of you thinks that you'll be as lucky as she was. That a god shall rise at the rim of our lava pit. He shall make a sign to one of you and up and out you will go, into the fresh air, into his arms. Then another god shall make another sign, and the last one of my little feather-brained sisters shall be gone. See if this old spinster minds.

Laugh if you wish but, believe it or not, I have enough memories of love to top all your experiences, past and future, all three of you, yes, Hi'iaka included.

*(Pele snuffles. Girls get up, come to her, fondle her.)*

#### PELE

I know, you didn't mean it that way. Anyhow, I don't care any longer. Once it was touch-and-go if I would let that pig of a god take your sister away. If I hadn't said "yes" where would I be now? There would have been no Kamalalawalu. And not one of the little ones that Kamalalawalu and Halemano begot. Pretty little ones. Their mama, she is somehow too close to us, the gods. There hangs something about her that should frighten most humans if they were less dazzled by her beauty. It's a good thing her big oaf of a husband has more brawn than brain, and more heart even than he has brawn. He never noticed it! How can one keep a curse alive while that fellow makes round eyes in his dreams at Kamalalawalu, and makes round eyes at her awake, too, now that he has the chance to do so. So he made her happy. So she made him happy. So they begat a bevy of babies, and that is where I come in. I like the little ones. Unlike their mama, they are real human, without that godly something gods and godlings never know how to shake off. So I found that, at heart, I had been a grandmother all the time only a grandmother without grandchildren. Well, maybe rather I was all the time a great-aunt. It is my pride now to be "Auntie" to the little ones.

*(Over the rim of the pit a form rises. It is Kama-pua'a. He is in war array. He stands poised a minute at his full height, his face glowing like gold in the rosy light. Pele turns toward him. The girls rise and greet him as he descends into the pit.)*

#### KAMAPUA'A

*(A grunt)* Fumes, sulphur. Sulphur fumes. I shall never get accustomed to it. Never should I have married into this family. *(Goes to Pele. Grunt)* Hi, Red Eyes! Hi, Knock-kneed! I know what you think. You wonder if I came alone.

(*Pele nods head.*)

# KAMAPUA'A

Don't worry now. They'll be here shortly. It is not always easy to pry them away from earth. [It makes even their mama uneasy. And Halemano should never know. A good thing that he is a conscientious king. [As all good kings should, he labors, he travels.] Always on the road, seeing to the welfare of his farmers and of his fishermen, hearing pleas from widows, and protecting orphans. Yes, a conscientious king.

# PELE

Still, he needed a good push to get there. Where are the little ones?

# KAMAPUA'A

They are here. With Hi'iaka they trailed behind a mite, to pick ohelo berries on the way to surprise you with.

*(Off stage excited babble of childish voices. Over the ledge, Hi'iaka and her grandchildren. Of course, Hi'iaka, being a goddess, has not aged. There are five GRANDCHILDREN, three boys and two girls, boys in malos and girls in skirt and shawl. They throw over the edge of the pit their twigs of ohelo. Much laughter. Then all descend into the pit. Hi'iaka meets her sisters lovingly. The children rush directly to Pele and climb all over her. Hugs. They rub their noses to her nose.)*

# CHILD I

Auntie, we have another surprise for you!

# CHILD II

Auntie, here's a stick. (*Gives Pele a twig.*)

# CHILD III

Auntie, here's another stick. (*Gives Pele another twig.*)

## CHILD IV

Rub them together, Auntie. They make fire.

## CHILD V

Honest, it works. We tried it.

*(The children stare hopefully at Pele holding the sticks.)*

## PELE

Thank you. Thank you very much.

*(Pele makes a pretense of rubbing stick against stick. A magical firework results, like showy harmless sparklers going up in all directions. It makes the children happy.)*

## PELE

Yes, it works. Look around now but don't<sup>you</sup> go where it's real red, just the dark spots. Or you would catch cold when you go out. *(Looks at Kamapua'a)* Out to Mister Pig's kingdom, or even back to your papa's kingdom. They are both full of drafts. Even here now.

*(Coughs. Tightens her scarf around her neck. Children scatter, investigating corners, cracks and nooks of the pit. Kamapua'a sits with Pele. Hi'iaka visits with her younger sisters.)*

## KAMAPUA'A

*(Gently)* Come, Red Eyes. Come, Knock-kneed. I dare you to say you don't like it.

## PELE

*(Sniffs)* I like it all right. Us gods, humans think we have it easy. They think it is a lark to be a goddess. Well, let me tell you, there are moments death would not be unwelcome, only we know deep down that it shall never come. And these little ones, they taught me something<sup>else</sup>. We gods began as we are now, same as we shall forever be. How could we remember a childhood when our nature denies us birth and growth? These humans, they should relish their own law of change, instead of forever beefing about decay.

*(Sniffles)*

To have been like these little ones once, I'd say that is well worth risking death for. (Sniffs) *sniffles*

*(Children now troop around the three sisters with some sort of an urgent request. The sisters rise. Hi'iaka, as spokesman for the children goes to Pele.)*

#### HI'IAKA

The children have still another surprise for you. They say it was hard to learn, but, because it was for their auntie, they kept learning.

*(Pele and Kamapua'a become an audience. Hi'iaka and her sisters kneel in background. Foreground, the children go into a hula, very childish and very unprofessional. As they dance, the three sisters clap their hands softly, sway to the rhythm, and sing.)*

#### CHILDREN AND SISTERS

Ka hale o Pele i noho ai  
Maka'ika'i mai, mai kini o ke akua.  
Ho'i aku e! Ho'i aku i waho na!  
He kahuna pule 'ole, he li'i pule 'ole,  
Mai komo mai wale i ka hale o Pele!

*(The dance over, Pele raises her hands in admiration. The children rush to her and again climb all over her. Hugs.)*

*To live in the house of Pele  
stopping there, <sup>at least</sup> ~~some~~ many gods - innumerable!  
[As to the others] get out, <sup>get</sup> out and <sup>stay</sup> outside!  
A godless priest, a godless chief  
There is no place for them in the house of  
Pele.*

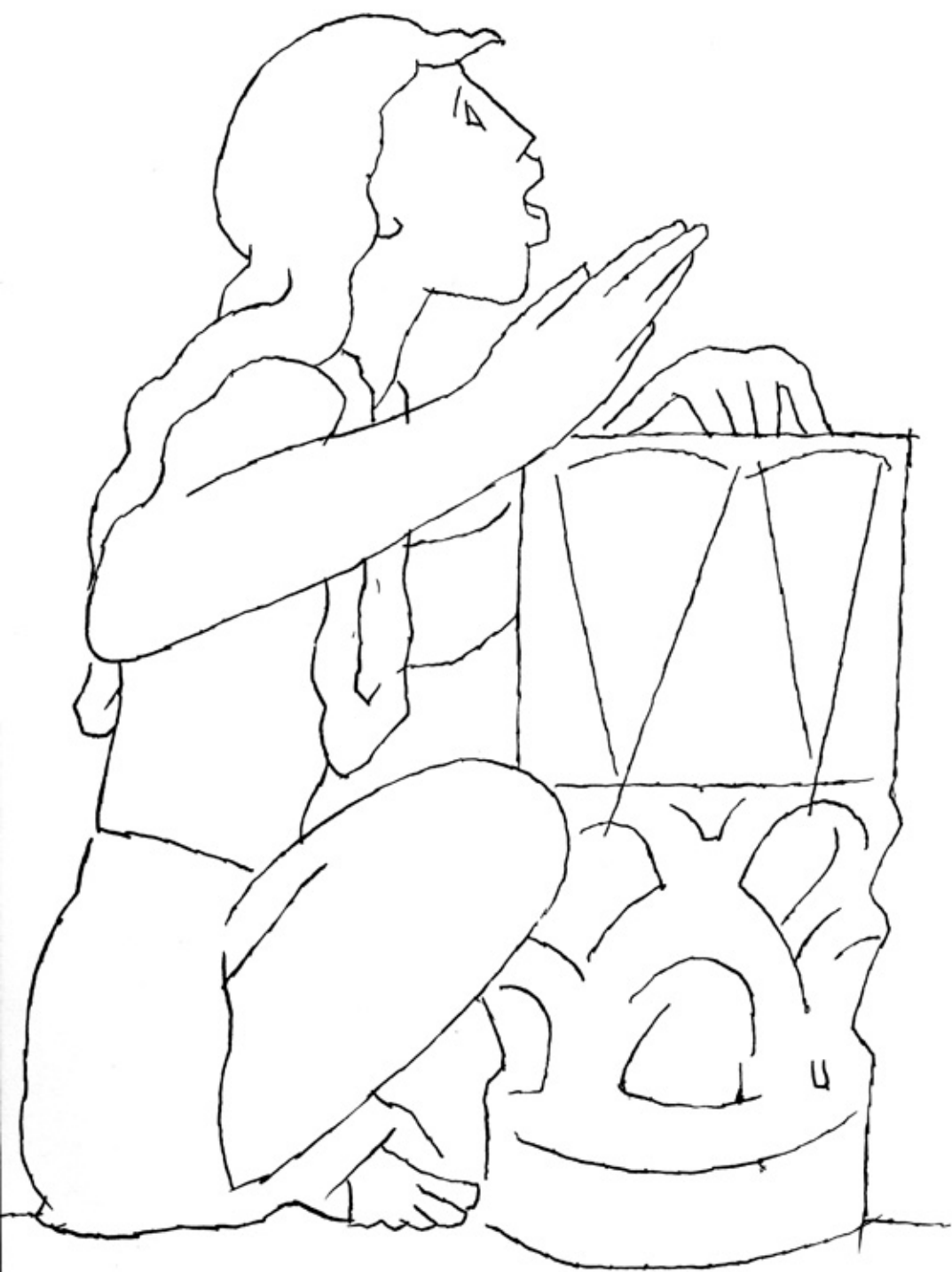
*For Peter*

### III Moa a Mo'i

Chicken Into King

↖  
Our house this house of Pele  
Strolling at ease here gods innumerable.  
As for you get out, if you stay out!  
A godless priest, a godless King  
Are out of place in the house of Pele!





## PROLOGUE

*Stage totally dark. Drummers, chanters, and dancers are on stage but cannot be seen until the end of the scene. Drumming begins. On lighted screen above the chanters' heads colors fluctuate indecisively, purples, blues, and blue-greens.*

### CHANTERS

In the beginning there was only the blueness of the night.  
The blackness of the blue spread everywhere.

*(On screen, an upsurge of black shoots upward, then spreads horizontally, suggestive of an island shape.)*

### CHANTERS

Out of the darkness of the blue-black,  
From the bottom of the liquid black,  
This fish that is our earth shot upward  
Hooked and pulled on a giant's line.  
This earthfish came to rest floating over the blue.

*(On screen, brown at bottom, blue at top. Flocks of specks streak through the screen in swift diagonal motions.)*

### CHANTERS

Bugs crawled over the earth. Birds and bats glided above it.

Roots dug into it. Stems sprouted flowers.  
 Flowers turned to fruits.  
 Thus clothed, the new earth waited.

*(On the screen, brown and blue lighten to oranges  
 and yellows in formations reminiscent of clouds  
 and explosions.)*

#### CHANTERS

Enter the gods.  
 The gods peopled the earth with godlings.  
 The begetters, the ancestor gods, heads lifted,  
 Multiplied the servant-gods, heads bowed.  
 For man yet to come the gods laid in ambush.  
 Grinding their upper teeth against their lower teeth to flint  
 sharpness  
 The shark-gods waited in the sea.  
 The hawk-gods filed their crooked beaks and claws against  
 the lava walls and waited.  
 Pig-gods shaped the clouds into ominous and ever-changing  
 omens.  
 The fire-goddess rehearsed spitting red-hot lava over an  
 earth that man in time would come to work and to cherish.  
 The gods waited in ambush for man to come:  
 In the forests, like spiders at the back of their webs;  
 In the sea, like eels coiled in hidden crags;  
 In the night, like the blue-black with which it all began.  
 Some gods looked like nothing that ever was on earth.  
 Some gods looked like nothing.

*(The screen divides horizontally in two halves:  
 blue-green at bottom (sea); blue-black at top,  
 flecked with pin-point lights (night sky). Shapes  
 suggestive of long canoes glide swiftly through the  
 simplified landscape, all in one direction.)*

#### CHANTERS

Manning canoes, scanning the stars,  
 From incredibly faraway Kahiki  
 Man came at last and landed.

*(On screen, movement slows and stops, as screen light fades out. A new light dawns on stage, where drummers, chanters, and dancers are now seen. An ancient hula is performed.)*

CHANTERS

Soon enough man came to know the new earth.  
It took him longer to know the new gods.  
They were not for him; they were not against him.  
Rather than disturb their enormous presence,  
Man learned to walk on this entrapped earth on tiptoe.

*(The last two lines chanted in a hushed key. The muffled drumming tapers to silence. Then, clearly enunciated, not chanted )*

CHANTERS

Now begins the story of Umi.



## ACT ONE

SCENE 1: *A farmer's grass hut.*

*'AKAHIAKULEANA, a woman still beautiful, squats on the ground. She wears a short brown skirt and a brown shawl, both of tapa cloth and rather nondescript. Long hair loose, with a hibiscus flower tucked at one side.*

*Off stage are heard thudding noises. Heavy steps approach and a gruff voice is heard, pitched to fury.*

HUSBAND

Wife. . . . 'Akahiakuleana. . . . Woman. . . .

*(Through the low door, as if thrown in, stumbles a boy of thirteen, lean and tired-looking, hurt but not frightened. It is UMI. The woman turns her head, not toward the boy crouching on the floor, but directly toward the door, resignedly.)*

*(HUSBAND enters, a sort of giant, dark and hairy. He throws in a corner his tools--an adze and a planting stick--makes straight for the boy. He plants his foot on the back of the boy's neck and strikes with a sort of rabbit punch, a hefty downward kick. Boy now lies absolutely flat on belly, arms extended. Husband should be played as furious without reserve, brutal, with a simplicity such*

*that it acquires comic undertones. He is a dog that both barks and bites.)*

#### HUSBAND

*(Booming declamation)* This weakling, my son! *(Flexes muscles)* Woman, am I not handsome? *(‘Akahiakuleana nods head in tired assent)* How can this crochety good-for-nothing, then, this sickly, puny nothing, then, be mine! *(As ‘Akahiakuleana nods again, faintly mocking, he snorts)* I am a giant pandanus tree that no wind can bend, no hurricane uproot! The boy is but a blade of grass, so weak that it breaks under even the weight of a single louse. *(Shuffles his foot into the prone boy)* Yet it talks back to me. It dares talk back to me. Me, his father; his lord, indeed! Tomorrow I shall kill him.

*(‘Akahiakuleana brings him a drink. He drinks. Anger changes to drowsiness. More drinking. As husband slumps down in sleep, the boy gradually rises to his knees. Boy rubs his hips with a grimace, slides to his mother's side, puts his head in her lap. She caresses him slowly.)*

#### UMI

*(Musingly)* Awake he will, mother, and dead I shall be. Of course, he is right. I will not gather wood, heat the oven, or cook. I will not put my hand to farming tools or feed chickens. I refuse to help father at his tasks and to wait upon him at home. I love you. I do not love him. He shall awake, mother, and I will die.

#### ‘AKAHIKULEANA

*(Gravely, while stroking his head)* Your father shall never kill you. Your father is not asleep... *(Looks back at snoring man)* and snoring. Your father never cursed you or struck you.

#### UMI

*(Off her lap now, kneels facing her)* Hush, mother, you are very tired. Sleep now.

*('Akahiakuleana rises, goes to rafters. From under the roof straw she takes a bundle, small and wrapped in brown cloth. Turns to Umi.)*

'AKAHIKULEANA

Tonight is the last night we shall spend together.

UMI

Father already said so. This is my last night. Good night.

'AKAHIKULEANA

*It is your last night with me, but not your last night. (She acts what she says next, not looking at Umi) I will fill a calabash with food. I will make a bundle of your things. (Still not looking at him) I will send you away in search of your father.*

*(Umi is awe-struck as her meaning slowly seeps in. In the silence that follows, she busies herself packing.)*

UMI

*(Pointing to man asleep)* Will he kill you then?

'AKAHIKULEANA

*(Lightly)* He drinks when he feels good and when he feels bad he drinks. Tomorrow, he shall drink.

*(Unwrapping the brown bundle, carefully she unrolls a ceremonial malo, a long band of red cloth. Understanding, the child now stands, legs apart. His mother carefully binds his loins with the malo, leaving wide flaps that hang front and back. Then she takes out of the wrapping a lei palaoa (whale-tooth necklace laced with human hair). She first holds it to herself, then ties it around the child's neck. The boy timidly strokes loincloth and necklace.)*

'AKAHIKULEANA

This loincloth, this necklace, both are sacred. They belong to our great king, Liloa. Wherever the servants of the king carry them, all must prostrate themselves. For touching



these sacred objects the penalty is death. But not for you.  
*(She wraps the brown cloth as a coverall to hide the royal garments. She gives the boy a shoulder-stick with calabash of food and traveler's bundle balanced at both ends.)*

*(Child embraces her, puts stick on shoulder, ready to leave.)*

'AKAHIAKULEANA

A three-day journey should take you to the palace. Let no one see you first that is not the king. Otherwise, you shall die.

*(Child exits.)*





## ACT ONE

*SCENE 2: King Liloa's coconut grove. Vertical palm trunks in endless recession. In the center, buddha-wise, the old king squats on a mat. His red loincloth is dimly seen under the wide black tapa cloak loosely wrapped, covering both shoulders, and reaching down to the ceremonial mat upon which he is squatting. Behind the king, two motionless bearers of tall kahilis (long stems topped with cylinders of plumes). At the sides of the king, two youngsters, one busy with a leaf fan and the other with a fly-switch of feathers. Courtiers squat according to rank, in a half circle around the king. Background of guards at attention, with spears at the ready.*

*Spittoon-bearer ceremonially brings wooden spittoon. He lifts its cover and the king spits. Cover is returned. The man exits backward at a crawl. Food-man crawls to king with platter. Food is curtly refused.*

*Commotion. Umi runs center, still wrapped in the brown rag, pursued by two more guards. He stops an indecisive instant, and the guards rush to spear him. With a quick backward move he escapes as guards collide in confused action. When they separate, Umi is seen nestling inside the king's lap, squatting too, like a smaller replica of the king. Guards back away. Without turning, the child puts his hands to the king's shoulders. The king frowns, then gently pulls away the brown coverall. As the rag falls, the red malo and the whale-tooth necklace appear. Without moving his head, as a blind man would, the king fondles the bone pendant.*

KING

*(Husky voice, quite gentle)* What is your name?

UMI

I am Umi. *(Silence. Then ...)*

KING

And your mother, 'Akahiakuleana, is she well?

UMI

She lives.

*(King now touches malo, his hand goes to the boy's navel. King frowns.)*

KING

*(With authority this time)* The boy must be consecrated with kingly rites. His navel must be struck. The god must watch.*(Attendants exit hurriedly. The king and the boy rise. Courtiers rise. Attendants re-enter with a kahuna, an elderly priest, decked in a long white robe. On his head a crown of leaves. An open garland of leaves hangs over his shoulders. He holds a cylindrical bundle wrapped in red cloth. Unwrapped, out comes the image of the god, a small wooden mask atop a pole, with its head-dress, a single feather. The god-pole is now planted center of stage.)**(Drums. The child, holding to, and held by, two attendants, approaches the god, his back to the audience. Priest unsheaths a stone knife. All close in. Drum crescendo and stops. In the silence that follows, child cries once. Crowd opens. When the child is seen, the malo has been rearranged, quite high at the waist, hiding navel.)**(Commotion outside, noisy entry of king's other son and heir, HAKAU, a man of twenty-five, armed with war club. His followers are also armed.)*

## HAKAU

What is the drumming for? Why does the god show its face?  
*(Pointing to Umi)* Who is he?

## KING

Son Hakau, meet my son Umi. Umi, Hakau, your brother.  
*(Hakau snarls, openly defiant)* Peace, Hakau. You remain  
 heir to all my lands. In time, all my servants and all my  
 warriors shall be yours. *(Meaningfully)* To son Umi, I  
 shall deed only the god.

*(The king seats himself center stage, as he was at the opening of the scene, but alone. Umi uproots the god-pole and retires left. With him there is only the priest, who holds the red wrapping cloth ceremonially displayed over both wrists. At right, Hakau, war club in hand, behind him crowd the kahili bearers, warriors, and courtiers. The two unequal groups confront each other, the king, center, looking neither right nor left. Then the king's head turns toward Umi. The king blows lightly in Umi's direction. The upright feather atop the god moves suddenly, points now toward Umi. The king smiles.)*



## ACT ONE

### SCENE 3: *The ocean.*

*Very low horizon. Most of the stage, then, is a starry night sky, with, prominently displayed, the Southern Cross. Floating at a near standstill, a double canoe, that is, a platform raised between two low hulls. It is seen from the front in three-quarter view. Some suggestion of slight motion, through a barely perceptible seesaw of the horizon line against the sky. Sound of lapping wavelets, very soft.*

*On top of the platform, two cylindrical bundles are laid. One is made up in a rolled mat. The other is covered with red tapa cloth. Movement inside the mat bundle. An arm comes out, then a head. It is Umi, now a young man of perhaps twenty. He emerges from inside the mat, naked but for a commoner's loincloth. He sits on the edge of the platform, feet dangling, hair tousled.*

#### UMI

Night again. Days and days and days with nothing to do, with nothing to look to, unless it be to watch the night turn into day, and the day turn to night. Nothing to eat for days and days and days. The lice even are getting scarce. *(Scratches head and picks something held between two finger tips. Carries it to mouth. Suddenly stops)* This may be the last one. It cannot dutifully be mine. It is the one sacrifice available, probably the last one I shall be able to offer the god. *(He opens his fingers over the red bundle, lets go)* I am hungry. Brother Hakau ever lacked in



brotherliness. When the king, our father, was alive and well, Hakau went about it slyly. "Boy Umi, leave my surf-board alone. Remember, my mother was a chiefess and yours only a commoner." "Brother Umi, the weather is fine for ti-leaf sliding. Everything is in readiness. So-and-so and so-and-so shall come with me, not you. It is a sport for noblemen only." And so on. After I grew up, after father sickened, Hakau bared his teeth more sharply. "Look chiefs, Umi holds his spear as if it was some farming tool." Or: "You crave a feather cloak, brother. Go pluck chickens at home!" And so on. O true father! O true king! A long time it took you to die. Hakau cared neither for you nor for the god. Both of you were left in my sole care. When I was still a boy, father entrusted me with the god. As I grew to manhood and as father grew older, it seemed to me that the god had entrusted father to me. Brother could hardly wait for father to die. The day it happened, brother had gone surfing. It was I who chose the secret cave where the mortuary bundle was laid. As a fact, it was I who carried father to his resting place. I and the old priest. A faithful priest, faithful to his old king, faithful to his god and to his god's keeper. That day, the moment brother returned from his surfing, he was King Hakau. Power to him was what slop is to a hog, something to wallow in and to choke on. He commanded, he rewarded, and most conspicuously he punished: by strangling, by stoning, by burning. When it was my turn to die, form at least was observed. "Brother Umi, the late king, our father, left the god in your care. You may have it. Of my own, I will add his priest to help you maintain a decorous sequence of chants and of ceremonials. Also a canoe, a double canoe in honor of the god. This god shall be your god, this canoe your kingdom, and this man your people." The god, the priest, and I, we three were put aboard the canoe. Brother felt sorry, he said, that no paddlers could be spared, but he needed them all for his war fleet. In fact, he needed everything else, to the last paddle and the last scrap of food. So we were set adrift, away from known currents. It took the old priest three days to die. I am young. It shall take me longer, but not overlong. (*Pats red tapa bundle*) It is for the god that I feel sorry. Already starving for prayers and for sacrifices, soon to be deprived

of even the last one of its worshippers. Forgive, O god. We did not mean to die. (*Umi rolls himself back inside his mat, head cradled on one arm. Half-asleep*) Your turn, O god, at the watch. (*Umi sleeps.*)

*(Now, the red tapa bundle begins to stir. Its front edge lifts up. What would be the head, arms, and shoulders of a creature raising itself on its elbows is suggested under the cloth. One sees now a head. It is the head of the god, that is, the god's mask, wrapped up in the tapa as if it were a shawl. The mouth remains hidden in a fold of the cloth.)*

#### GOD

(*Gently*) Indeed, friend Umi, it is my turn to take the watch. Your offering of a single louse was scarcely filling. Perhaps it was not the most substantial sacrifice I ever received. But the respect you showed, the thoughtfulness you showed despite your hunger, warmed my innards. It is pleasant, indeed, when young people show respect for old folks. You helped your father, Liloa, to the end. That pleased us both. Now, as you help me with your very small offering, it pleases me. For old gods can feel much older than ever old men do. But rarely do young men, in this day and age, stop long enough to take time and help old gods. (*In a harsher tone of voice*) I know one, a king, who proved to be as impolite as he is ambitious. May his taro fields wither. May his queens give birth to females exclusively. May his seers vaticinate follies. May the wars he fights turn to disasters. (*Coughs. Gentle again*) I should not get all heated up on such a meager fare. Let us both preserve our strength. Just now, as things are, you would hardly believe that, friend Umi, but as I see it, it seems to me that you are earmarked for a very long life. Some day not too far off, you shall become a king. A good one at that, and indeed a great king. Right now, as you so often do, you are dreaming about it. Right now, drifting, drifting, starving, starving, little would you believe that your dream shall come true. We may see to it that it does. A louse for a kingdom. Even when dealing with a god, one would say it is fair barter.

*(As the god speaks, the full moon rises from the sea, very large and very pink. Pink moonlight bathes the stage. The god tucks his head back under the cloth, its shoulders and arms flatten. The tapa bundle is cylindrical again. Now Umi awakes, sits up, yawns.)*

#### UMI

Night still. Or perhaps it is the following night. I lost track, so weak am I. My last day most probably. It is a bitter thing that I should at this time dream that same dream again. When I was a child in the woods I dreamt it; I dreamt it when I was a prince at court. And now to dream it when I am as good as dead. King, indeed. Tomorrow, shark bait. *(Looks at tapa bundle)* Poor god. Soon to be deserted. As motionless as an infant asleep, and as helpless as a baby. *(Suddenly perceived against the rising disk of the moon and gradually eclipsing it, the sloping edge of a cliff. Wonderingly)* Land!





## ACT ONE

### SCENE 4: Fishermen's village.

*A hut, nets drying; sound of the surf. At right an OLD FISHERMAN is pounding poi (the gray pulp of the taro root) with a stone pestle over a wooden board. A dish of water is at hand; from time to time the old man sprinkles the bottom of the pestle with a swift gesture. At his sides, his twin daughters. One rolls and ties tapa bark in small bundles; one removes the stem of ti leaves and cleans them. The coming monologue is punctuated throughout by the unequal but orderly rhythm of stone pestle struck against wooden board.*

#### OLD FISHERMAN

Daughters, I am too old to go fishing. Not since our great King Liloa died have I chanced to go to sea. A good king, Liloa. One last task is left for this old man: pound, pound, pound, pound the taro root into a pulp, into mush, into poi.

*(In background, in silent action, fishermen return from the sea. Wives meet them. All carry their catch, small fishes on leaf platters, large ones held at the gills. Frieze-like joyful gestures. The action is seen through the open mesh of the nets hung in the mid-ground to dry.)*

#### OLD FISHERMAN

*(Looking longingly at background action)* Others shall relish fish just caught, still bleeding at the gills. Others shall

savor octopus, its black blood still heaving through the white body. For us, nothing but poi, poi, poi. Pound, pound, pound. (*Another look at background action*) Daughters, you could have mated with at least two mates, two fishermen, ugly ones perhaps, but good providers. You had to fall in love, you both had to marry just the one man. A handsome man. A no-good man. A drifter come from nowhere. Arms he has that could throw a net. Hands he has to work a paddle. Mouths we all have, and stomachs, too. When the time comes to divide the catch, having done nothing your husband gets nothing. So pound, pound, pound; that is my lot--and poi, poi, poi--that is our fare.

*(Behind the returning fishermen, dressed in a commoner's loincloth, Umi appears, empty-handed. His two wives rush to him and embrace him joyfully. The three enter hut. The old fisherman now is dozing by the poi board. Enter a MESSENGER with servants and men armed with spears and clubs. They are led by a very OLD WOMAN in a priestess' robe, long and soiled, its hem singed by volcanic fire. She leans on a heavy twisted stick. The men stop indecisively as she stops.)*

#### MESSENGER

Old crone, musty witch, crooked goddess, again you have lost the scent. Again the royal spoor eludes your hair-filled nostrils. Such a hunt, such a quest, over ridges and seas. And for what, ha! To land last on this speck of a rock, slimy with fish scales, fishermen's dung, and birds' guano. (*Shuffles his feet*) Meanwhile King Hakau raves and rants and the kingdom goes to ruin. Confess, O priestess, that, as is well known, only a black hog set in motion by the gods shall be able to nose out the prince.

*(Villagers now crowd behind the voyagers.)*

#### WITCH

*(In a toothless croak to messenger)* Hush, child, hush.

*(She straightens herself, raises her stick at arm's length over her head. It acts like a divining rod, circling slowly until it points straight at Umi's*

*door. It should be felt that it is the live stick that moves the old woman in a trance, and not otherwise. Casually, unaware, Umi comes through the door, his wives at his sides.)*

# WITCH

The quest has ended.

*(One sees how the power leaves her. She bends as before, leaning on the stick that is again only a stick. Goes to back of stage. Umi straightens up, very still. His wives fall away from him. Messenger rushes to Umi; a quick prostration.)*

# MESSENGER

King Hakau begs you [to] return, O Prince Umi. No harm shall befall you, he swears. He swears by the god. Government has come to a standstill without the god. The taro fields wither. The queens give birth to females exclusively. The [minor] seers vaticinate follies. Wars are fought and lost.~ *(Humbly)* King Hakau acknowledges you his brother. Share the power with him, but for the sake of nobles and commoners alike, let us again look on the face of the god.

*(Umi has not moved through this. Now, he opens his legs, standing very straight. A man rushes with a red malo and girdles Umi with it. Another ties on his neck the ceremonial necklace, the lei palaoa.)*

# UMI

I will go. Wait.

*(Goes into hut. When he emerges it is with the god-bundle cradled in the crook of his arms. All prostrate themselves, including wives. The half-awake father-in-law half attempts to do so. Exit Umi leading the voyagers, the witch hobbling after them.)*





## ACT ONE

*SCENE 5: King Hakau's coconut grove, once the grove of King Liloa. Courtiers in strained and disorderly attitudes are bunched together center stage, mid-ground. From the left enter Umi and his companions, just landed. Courtiers halfheartedly prostrate themselves, heads bowed.*

UMI

*(Casually, as if to himself)* A quick swim and a long sleep, that is my need. *(Stops, takes in the scene)* Brother Hakau did not care to meet me? Playing checkers perhaps, or gone surf-riding? *(Courtiers do not make a move or answer him. Umi notices the king's spittoon-bearer standing at attention at his side. Heartily)* Come, come. Brother at least has favored me with the presence of his trusted spittoon-bearer. Truly a major welcome. *(His mood changes, becomes serious. There is puzzlement now)* But what of his royal needs?

*(Spokesman for all, a KEEPER OF KAPUS crosses to Umi and kneels. A red tapa cloak is wrapped about him Roman fashion. He holds a long cane.)*

KEEPER OF KAPUS

Your royal brother has little need for a spittoon-bearer, O King Umi.

UMI

*King Umi?*

## KEEPER OF KAPUS

King Umi.

UMI

*(Closes eyes, meditates, opens eyes)* When did it happen?

## KEEPER OF KAPUS

This morning. Toward the end King Hakau was more than short-tempered. Unjustly blaming his mounting ill-luck on what he called your kidnapping of the god, he dispatched an embassy to find you if possible, and to lure you both back. King Hakau had planned for you a very poor welcome. His orders were that the [giant] royal oven should be heated red-hot. You were to be made drowsy with fermented awa juice and then thrown into the fire alive. Obsessed by a suspicion that his commands were not followed to the letter, the king came in person to check the oven's heat. Eager to imitate the royal example, many courtiers crowded around him. A crush resulted and our lord unhappily stumbled into the fire. The fire, as ordered, was exceedingly hot....

*(Keeper of kapus signals with cane. The courtiers open up, disclosing behind them the royal mat. On the mat a fat basket tied with ropes, half-covered with palm fronds. Kapu-sticks--sticks ending in a wooden sphere wrapped in tapa--are planted at the sides. Servants remove the palm fronds, exposing basket.)*

UMI

*(Musingly)* It was an accident?

## KEEPER OF KAPUS

It was an accident. Indeed, all customary honors were paid to the body, or I should rather say, the remains. The royal hands and feet have been cut off and thoroughly salted. The bones of his late majesty have been picked absolutely clean. As to when and where to secrete the basket, only you, O King, may give this last order. *(In an official voice, raising his cane, and turning to courtiers)* May King Hakau's bones live long!

## ALL COURTIERS

*(Heartily)* May King Hakau's bones live long!

## UMI

*(Softly as if to himself)* May brother Hakau's bones live long. He had sworn on the god. The god works swiftly. *(To keeper of kapus, pointing to funeral display)* To the temple.

*(Ceremonially, but hurriedly, the basket is removed, together with the kapu-sticks. Now and all through the next action, servants arrange unobtrusively a fresh royal mat and courtiers place themselves in correct order around it.)*

*(Last to take their places, directly behind the mat, are two very fat and very beautiful women richly attired: Hair cut in a sort of crew cut. At the forehead, the roots of the hair, discolored with lime, are absolutely white. Feather head-leis and feather shoulder-leis. Their skirts, in a black-and-white pattern, are pleated and voluminous. Their scarves are of the same red as the royal malo. They wear whale-tooth necklaces. Servants, kahili-bearers, fan and fly-switch pages, spittoon-bearer, food-man, etc., also take their proper places. All this should happen as a silent background to foreground action.)*

*(In the foreground, a page brings to Umi an ample cloak, red feathers on the outside and basket weave inside. Another page brings a long spear and a helmet shaped very much like a Greek helmet, also of red feathers. The pages wait.)*

## UMI

Ah, yes, the test. I had forgotten.

*(The two pages help him into cloak and helmet and hand him the long spear. A group of five warriors enters. They are very tall men, dressed in war array: red feather cloaks shorter than the*

royal cloak, red feather helmets, long spears identical to that of the king. Umi, center, faces the five, ranged around him in a half-circle. The king holds his spear horizontally in both hands, arms raised and apart, for defensive purpose only. His opponents hold the spear in one hand, arm raised and thrown back, the spear point aimed straight at the king's torso. At a grunt and a stomp from the king all plunge with great force their weapons "into" the king's body. Umi spars, whirling his one spear with such force that it knocks his attackers' spears out of their hands, or deflects the blows. It is not a drill, but truly a battle, albeit an orderly one. Violent action lasts only a short time. The battle over, the king's opponents open ranks respectfully. The king now holds in his hands four spears, his own and three snatched from his opponents, with two more spears at his feet. There is blood on his chest and cheek. Some of the five, obviously hurt, massage wrists or wipe off sweat and blood. Umi throws the spears he holds to the ground.)

UMI

(Joyfully) Why, that was as relaxing as a bath! Good men. You'll keep your jobs and ranks.

(The five warriors now take their appointed places about the royal mat. The pages approach and wipe the king's sweat and blood with tapa towels. Umi turns around, sees the place made ready for him, with all courtiers at attention. To keeper of kapus, pointing to the two queens.)

UMI

What ...

KEEPER OF KAPUS

(Respectfully) Your queens.

UMI

(Sighing to himself) Brother, what taste!

*(Umi now exchanges feather cloak and helmet for the same ample black tapa cloak that was once Liloa's. Thus attired, he goes to the royal mat and squats on it, buddha-wise, looking very much like his father, Liloa.)*

#### KEEPER OF KAPUS

*(Facing the courtiers from the side and very official. Taps with his cane to call attention)* Hear, indeed hear! Hear indeed! The new reign has begun auspiciously. You have all seen. King Umi has mastered his fate. The spears snatched from his opponents signify his future conquests. The spears he threw to the ground are his defeated enemies. The reign has begun.

*(Throughout the speech Umi has not moved. Now the spiltoon-bearer is at the ready. The two queens tentatively put a hand each to his thighs. All courtiers expectantly look toward him.)*



## ACT ONE

### SCENE 6: *A beach on Hawaii.*

*For the moment the only thing one sees is a lighted cave at the far right. The rest of the stage is dark. Though it is a natural cave, its vaulted ceiling suggests a Gothic arch. The shape of the opening, high and narrow, furthers the idea of a small Gothic chapel.*

*Inside the cave the god is displayed center, its pole planted upright in the crack of a large stone. On top of the stone sits Umi, one knee raised to his chin, the other leg dangling to the ground. His right arm is entwined around the pole of the god, the left hand rests on his raised knee. His head is bowed, cheek pressed firmly against the pole. He has no necklace or other mark of rank. His only garment is a commoner's loincloth.*

*The light is cast by a single kukui-nut oil lamp, a platter set directly on the ground at Umi's feet. As the flame flickers in the draft, enlarged shadows move against the back wall of the cave.*

*Umi talks without gestures, half to himself, half to the god.*

UMI

*(Soft chanting)*

God of my ancestors, ancestor god - *ea!*

God of my grandfathers, grandfather god - *ea!*

God of my father Liloa, father god - *ea!*



(Talks) Now I am King Umi, and I see why it is that I was born to be a king. When young I would not put my hand to a farmer's tool, or cook, or feed chickens. When young I refused to cast a fisherman's net, or paddle a canoe. I did not attempt to do a bit of work until I put my hand to a kingly spear. From then on my thirst for work has known no limit, because now it is a king's work I am bid to do. I could have died; I should have died, of that unfathomable driving ambition to get where I knew it was my right to be, the one thing right for me.

(*Reminiscently massages the back of his neck*) When that mock-father of my youth, furious at my refusal to go to work, would grind the flat of his foot into the crook of my young neck, I should have died. When brother Hakau fumed and ranted because at heart he knew that never would I be satisfied with the second place--and how it meant death for him--I should have died. When that canoe became the whole of my kingdom, O god, how I should have died! (*Half jokingly*) When that fisherman father-in-law of mine begged me to cast a net, at the sight of his old belly getting flabby on a famine fare of mush for shame I should have died.

How strange--before I became a king, I wanted only to do kingly things. Now that I am a king, I crave to do the things commoners do--till the soil, or go fishing. And, indeed, as soon as I shall have proved myself to be truly a king, I will do just that. As a beginning, here I am pretending to be a commoner, hopping from village to village, inquiring, asking, of peasant, of widow, of oldster, of orphan, of slave even, what it is they expect from a king. What they want me to be, that I shall be; I swear it by you, O god!

Brother Hakau was a proud king. He was a cruel king. He was a splendid king. But he was not the kind of a king to do the work of a king. The kingdom father left him soon cracked open and split apart as does a thin lava tube when its inner core of fire flows away. Already, over the sea channels, over the islands, looking at us like a hungry ogre, our rival 'Aikanaka, King of Kauai, prepares to earn his name of man-eater. Though possessed of immense power, 'Aikanaka is but a bully--as was my mother's husband. The king of Kauai wants to place his large foot over my kingdom and stomp on it, and kick at it, and stomp on it again. His

canoe-hewers work day and night scooping out giant tree trunks for an invasion fleet that no other king could match, that none could stop--unless it be a god.

*(Toward the end of the monologue, the rising moon lights the entire stage in blue with progressive intensity. One sees a small beach hemmed in by high boulders. At left the sound of waves implies the sea. Sound may taper off as action progresses. Suddenly hailing shouts are heard, then a scraping sound, and a thud. As if being beached with the tide, a large double canoe glides in, or at least its double prow appears. At the noise, Umi stops his soliloquy and quickly smothers the light. He emerges from the cave. Its opening now blends perfectly with the dark of the boulders.*

*Enter two paddlers who have waded ashore from the other side of the canoe. Their heads are encased in spherical calabash-helmets, closed but for an eyeslit in front, and topped with a panache of green ferns. They wear tan loincloths and tan tapa capes. Each holds a paddle. They line up, martial-like, and wait. Two more paddlers, clothed identically, now carry to shore, seated on their overlapping paddles, the PRINCESS. She is slight, and very young and pretty. Her short skirt is of a faded pink hue. Her headlei is small, with alternating green, white, and red feathers. At her neck a tiny "whale-tooth" pendant. From her shoulder hangs a calabash the size of a lady's purse. Once on her feet, the princess modestly sits on a small rock to the right. Out of the calabash she spreads at her side loose flowers and twine. From then on, though taking in all that goes on, she will work at the making of a lei, stringing flowers.*

*Her two paddlers return to the canoe and carry back, in the same manner as before, the AMBASSADOR. Then they join their colleagues. All four stand at attention, holding their paddles as if they were spears. The ambassador is lean and long.*

*Along a median line drawn from head to groin, one half of his body is tattooed solid blue. That includes half of his face and one leg. His hair is very long and well combed. His loincloth, the length of a Scottish kilt, has a checkerboard pattern. Both head-lei and neck-lei are made of pink flowers. They are cylindrical and voluminous. The head-lei, though large, is shaped exactly like a doughnut. In one hand he holds a straw-plaited fan and in the other a very tall and very thin cane. From time to time he raises the neck-lei to his nose and sniffs at it, as if to counteract bad smells. His voice is high-pitched. Umi watches the landing from a distance.)*

#### AMBASSADOR

*(Signalling to Umi with the cane) Eh! You! (Naturally curious and entering into the spirit of the situation, Umi obeys.)*

#### UMI

*(Awkward curtsy) Your bidding, officer.*

#### AMBASSADOR

*(Pained) Not a soldier, no! (Pompously) Ambassador! Sent by the great and invincible king of Maui to Umi, King of Hawaii. Purpose: eternal peace between the two nations. Means: the beautiful virgin, the daughter of the king, as a pledge of good faith. (Umi looks blank. With a laugh close to a hiccup) A well-rehearsed speech is wasted. (Dangles a cane) Fisherman, where may I contact some official person? (Umi looks blank. Exasperated) The nearest village, clod, the nearest village!*

*(The ambassador sniffs at his lei and in so doing recovers his poise. Umi points toward the back to an opening between the rocks. The ambassador, leaving two paddlers to guard the princess, exits with the other two.)*

*(Umi tentatively approaches the princess but the paddlers, by crossing menacingly their paddles in*

*his path, signify that the princess is kapu, that is, out of bounds. Meekly, Umi backs away.)*

*(A pause. On stage, only the fingers of the princess are in motion, unconcernedly stringing flowers.)*

*(The hoot of an owl is heard, obviously a fake one and, as obviously, the work of Umi. The paddlers look up and then toward the rocks, uneasily. Another hoot, somehow stronger and stranger. Now the paddlers huddle together for comfort. Umi goes to them.)*

UMI

*(Kindly)* Are you men afraid of owls? *(The paddlers nod a silent yes. Soothingly)* Oh well, then, don't be afraid. That was not an owl. *(The paddlers seem relieved)* No, indeed. No bird or beast, no crab, no bat, no nit even would care to live here. Us locals know why, too. *(A pause)* We call this place "The backbone of the dragon." It is just that. In fact, you stand on it right now. *(Guards shuffle their feet)* As dragons go, it is not a bad one, though. What bothers us is the company he keeps: ghosts and ghouls and such. The worst of them are the fog-gods. Maybe you people don't have them where you come from. Well, their substance is so thin that, at least in the moonlight, you can hardly distinguish them from nothing. Only the other day a fellow entered the mouth of one who was yawning. Before he knew it he was in the god's stomach. All digested the next morning we found him. *(Paddlers let out a yell and a howl, and exit at full speed. Umi goes to the princess who works unconcernedly)* Are you afraid?

PRINCESS

*(Calmly)* Indeed, yes. But go on. Tell me some more.

UMI

What do you want to know?

PRINCESS

What is your name?

UMI

They call me U for short.

*(Pronounce "U" as the double "O" in "boot"--not "you.")*

PRINCESS

What is the long of it?

UMI

I forgot.

PRINCESS

U, that is a nice name, U. U, what is it they say about your king?

UMI

First tell me what the king, your father, says of him.

PRINCESS

Little. Only that he is a good-looking man, and much better tempered than was King Hakau.

UMI

He would say that to you. Here, they say his breed is so close to that of the gods that he changes his form at will. One moment he is a man and the next he is a large fish, and so on. I do not know it for a fact to be so.

PRINCESS

I don't like fish.

UMI

*(Warming up to his subject)* From what they say, to him you would be mere skin and bones. He likes fat queens. By magic and special diet he expands their livers until there is hardly room left for the tripes.

PRINCESS

Ugh!

UMI

Our king is an exceedingly busy man. So when a new queen arrives he has her looked over by his learned men. If a single pimple, or even a single blackhead, is discovered,

out she goes. A queen, as the king says, should be absolutely without blemish.

PRINCESS

*(Bursts into tears)* I don't want to be a princess. I don't want to be a queen. I want to go home.

UMI

*(Sits close to her. Inquiringly)* You have a pimple? *(Princess nods affirmatively)* Just one? *(Princess nods again)* Oh well, maybe you'll pass. Our king is very magnanimous at times.

PRINCESS

*(Feeling truly miserable now. More tears)* If he sends me back home it will have to be war. And papa says we can't go to war because we don't have an army. We are not like you. We are a little island, all farmers and fishermen. If we took some of them away from their work, we couldn't eat. *(As Umi holds her in his arms she sniffs suspiciously)* U, you don't smell of fish.

UMI

I just had a swim.

PRINCESS

*(Patting his arm and shoulder)* You are not wet.

UMI

One dries quickly in the... in the moonlight.

PRINCESS

*(In his arms)* U, dear U, take me away with you. For you, U, I'll scale the fish you fish, and ...

*(As she speaks, footsteps and voices are heard. When the ambassador and his four paddlers enter, Umi stands alone. The princess strings flowers.)*

AMBASSADOR

Madam, all the arrangements are made. *(Looking at Umi)* I hope that nothing ... *(Another look, a laugh, a sniff at*

*the lei, and a shake of his cane)* But, of course not!  
(*Hiccups*) Come, Madam.

*(The princess gathers her work into the calabash and obeys. As she passes Umi, she tosses to him the lei she has just finished. The paddlers close around her. The ambassador shows the way. Exit.)*

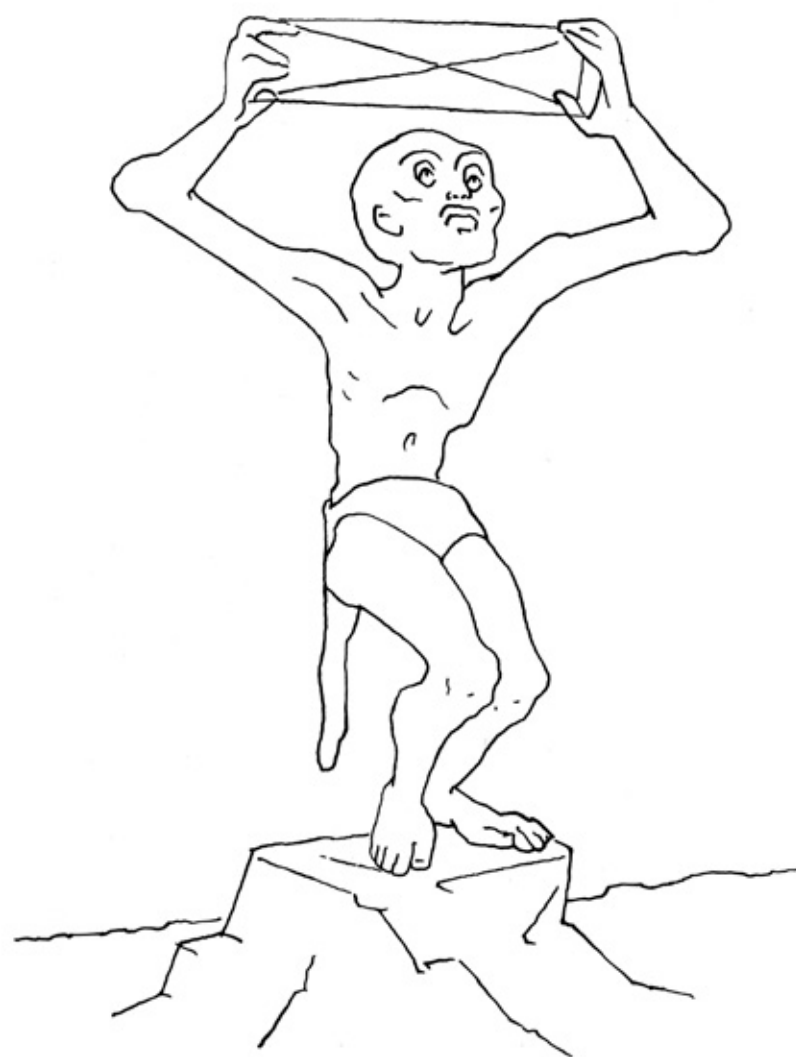
UMI

*(Softly)* U. A pretty name, U. I hope she goes on calling me U. *(In a much stronger voice. He is again King Umi )* Maui is mine. And now to go and make war on that bully, that man-eater, 'Aikanaka, King of Kauai!

*(The scene should end with the rose light of dawn intruding upon the moonlight.)*







## ACT TWO

### SCENE 1: *The camp of King 'Aikanaka, Kauai.*

*The top of a rocky hill, quite barren. For entrances and exits, left should suggest a downward path from the top of the hill to the valley below. Backdrop, representing sky, is solid blue.*

*In the background, 'Aikanaka's warriors are training. They are of two types, spearmen and men armed with the war club. All are clothed in gray-green loincloths. The spearmen drill two ways. Some use the stroke already seen in Act I, Scene 5. The stance is upright. The arm that holds the lance is raised and flung back and the stroke is downward. Other spearmen, walking with a sort of American Indian crouch, dangle the arm that holds the spear until the horizontal shaft hugs the ground. From the crouch, the stroke is delivered upward. The spearmen are lean and agile and move in unison. To the spectator, they should present themselves in profile against the blue of the sky, and thus acquire the shallow depth of a bas-relief.*

*Another group drills with war clubs that look very much like the classical club of Hercules. These men are heavy-set athletes with the physique of weight lifters. They use side-strokes; strokes delivered straight forward from up down and from down up; and a two-handed whirl for defense. The drill should be silent, without clash or thump as they proceed in slow motion.*

*In the foreground center, two men are playing a game of konane, or Hawaiian checkers. The square wooden board is set on top of a stone. The pieces used for checkers are black stones and white stones. The two men are engrossed in their game, as would modern chess players be.*

*The player at right is 'AIKANAKA, King of Kauai. He is a coarse and heavy-set man, built very much like Umi's assumed father seen at the opening of the play. Like his soldiers, 'Aikanaka wears a gray-green loincloth, to which is added a full-length gray-green cape of tapa cloth. His whale-tooth necklace is unusually large and heavy. His opponent, an OFFICER, is dressed in identical fashion, but his cape is short and he has no necklace.*

*A triple move by the king, punctuated by three clanks of pebble against the board in quick succession, ends the game. Both men rise. It is now clear that the king is drunk. His opponent is quite sober. From a crouching position a steward presents to the king a drinking calabash. The king gulps from it noisily and passes the cup to his opponent, who takes only a token sip.*

*Throughout the following, both men move to the left, close to the edge of the stage.*

'AIKANAKA

Let's see, what was the wager for this last game?

OFFICER

(*Soberly*) Your royal necklace, sir, against my life.

'AIKANAKA

(*Jovially*) I must have been drunk! Well, a wager's a wager.

*(King proceeds to untie his whale-tooth necklace, and holding it up at both ends, starts to pass it over to his opponent.)*

OFFICER

Sir, it was you that won.

## 'AIKANAKA

Well, a wager's a wager. (*King replaces at leisure the lei on his own neck. Looks at his belt for something that he fails to find*) Lend me yours.

(*Officer takes from his belt a short dagger, leaf-shaped, and cut from one piece of hard wood. He hands it to the king. A wolfish scowl spreads over the features of the king. Heavy breathing. For an instant he balances the shaft lightly in his hand, then with a short uppercut drives with great force the blade into the other's stomach. One cannot see the blade strike, the green cape being in the way. Officer doubles up and falls dead.*)

## 'AIKANAKA

I am bored. Call the wizard.

(*A servant hurries out. Two servants wrap the corpse in a mat, and drag it off the stage. Another takes away checkerboard and checkers. The steward again offers the king his cup and the king drinks. The background drill goes on as usual.*)

(*Servant comes back pushing in front of him, rather unceremoniously, the WIZARD. A tiny wizened man, head shaved, and famished-looking. His narrow malo is black and blends so well with his blue-black skin that he appears quite naked. He holds his two hands high before him, closed fist against closed fist. His stance is monkey-like, legs half-bent, his spine at a crouch. The back flap of his malo hangs behind him like a tail.*)

(*The king now leans nonchalantly against the up-rights. At the sight of the wizard, all soldiers hurriedly stop their drill. The seer jumps on top of the stone, the same one that served as table for the konane board. The men eagerly crowd in a half-circle around him. Those with war clubs squat, clubs held with both hands, resting diagonally in front of them. The spearmen stand behind*

*them, spears vertically held at attention. But their bodies are relaxed and they crane their necks with boyish anticipation.)*

*(The seer, without straightening his stance, starts rocking his body very slightly, rhythmically shifting his weight from one foot to the other. His thin, piping voice intones a singsong, on a few notes, quite childish. Tempo increases as he goes on, but the voice remains weak. His fists are still held tightly together in front of him. Soldiers imperceptibly swing with the rhythm.)*

#### WIZARD

'O kahi ka po.

'O lua ka po.

'O kolu ka po.

'O ha ka po.

'O lima ka po.

'O ono ka po.

'O hiku ka po.

'O walu ka po.

'O iwa ka po. *Lele wale.*

*(The group of men looks on in a sort of trance, and rocks to the rhythm of the singsong throughout the rest of the scene long after it has ceased. The king is immune. Wizard now quickly, as would a prestidigitator, opens his hands and arms and displays what he held in his fists, a twine which has become a cat's cradle. Moves hands and fingers deftly, each time changing the pattern. The last string figure is that of an elongated rectangle with diagonals. Now the seer opens wide his eyes and looks through the string he holds as if through a window. Soldiers in back of him look too, but in vain.)*

#### WIZARD

I see canoes, many canoes. Red canoes and white canoes, long canoes and very long canoes, thin canoes and wide canoes. And men, men, men. It is war.

## 'AIKANAKA

(Nonchalantly, from the corner of the stage) Wizard, now tell us what you hear.

*(Wizard passes the string over his head and throws it over his shoulders. He stuffs some of the string into his ears, securing it on both sides with an index finger thrust into each ear. He talks now in a voice surprisingly deeper and louder than his own.)*

## WIZARD

The chicken is king.  
He sits on the ridgepole of the house.  
He sits on the shoulder of 'Aikanaka.  
He sits on the head of 'Aikanaka.

*(Then, with desperate urgency, as if realizing that what he says may cost him his life, yet say it he must) When the king is chicken then the chicken is king.*

*(Immediately the king is upon him. Holding the wizard with both hands, he roughly sets him down from the stone. King takes hold of the twine around the wizard's neck and twists it savagely.)*

## 'AIKANAKA

Chicken, chicken, chicken! What bilge! Old man, you are slipping and slipping fast.

*(Holding the string at the wizard's back now, the king drives him out with a kick delivered from the flat of his foot into the crook of his back. Critical shaking of heads and murmurs from the soldiers, still under the spell.)*

*(From left enters a RUNNER in a simple malo. He has been running long and is quite out of breath. He collapses at the feet of the king, takes deep breaths before he can speak.)*

## RUNNER

*(Pointing back with wide sweeping gesture) Canoes, red canoes and white canoes, long canoes and very long canoes,*

thin canoes and wide canoes. And men, men, men. From Hawaii. Anchored offshore, waiting for the tide.

*(Having delivered his message, he collapses. A servant helps him exit. The king now sits on the stone, his head turned, not to where the messenger has pointed, but to where the wizard left. Soldiers stand in disorder.)*

'AIKANAKA

War! Get ready!

*(Exit soldiers, still in disorder.)*

'AIKANAKA

Where is the keeper of kapus?

*(KEEPER OF KAPUS enters. Rather portly; close-cropped white hair. Dressed in a long cloak of gray-green tapa that reaches to his feet. The cloak is draped exactly like a Roman senatorial toga. With his free hand he holds a stick, as high but thicker than that of the ambassador in Act I, Scene 6.)*

KEEPER OF KAPUS

I saw. I hurried. Your wish?

'AIKANAKA

*(Factual, a good executive)* What is usual. Tabu all work but that of state. No farming or fishing until the enemy fleet has been helped to the beach. See that their canoes are securely tied. I may have use for them after. Billet their men for the night. The officers will want to stay with them. And plenty of food. We don't want them to make a poor showing. Tell them that war shall begin tomorrow at sunrise. No, make it mid-morning. It is their last sleep.

KEEPER OF KAPUS

A minor matter, O King. When it comes to personal combat, I beg you, refuse to duel with Umi.

'AIKANAKA

*(Sharply)* Why?

KEEPER OF KAPUS

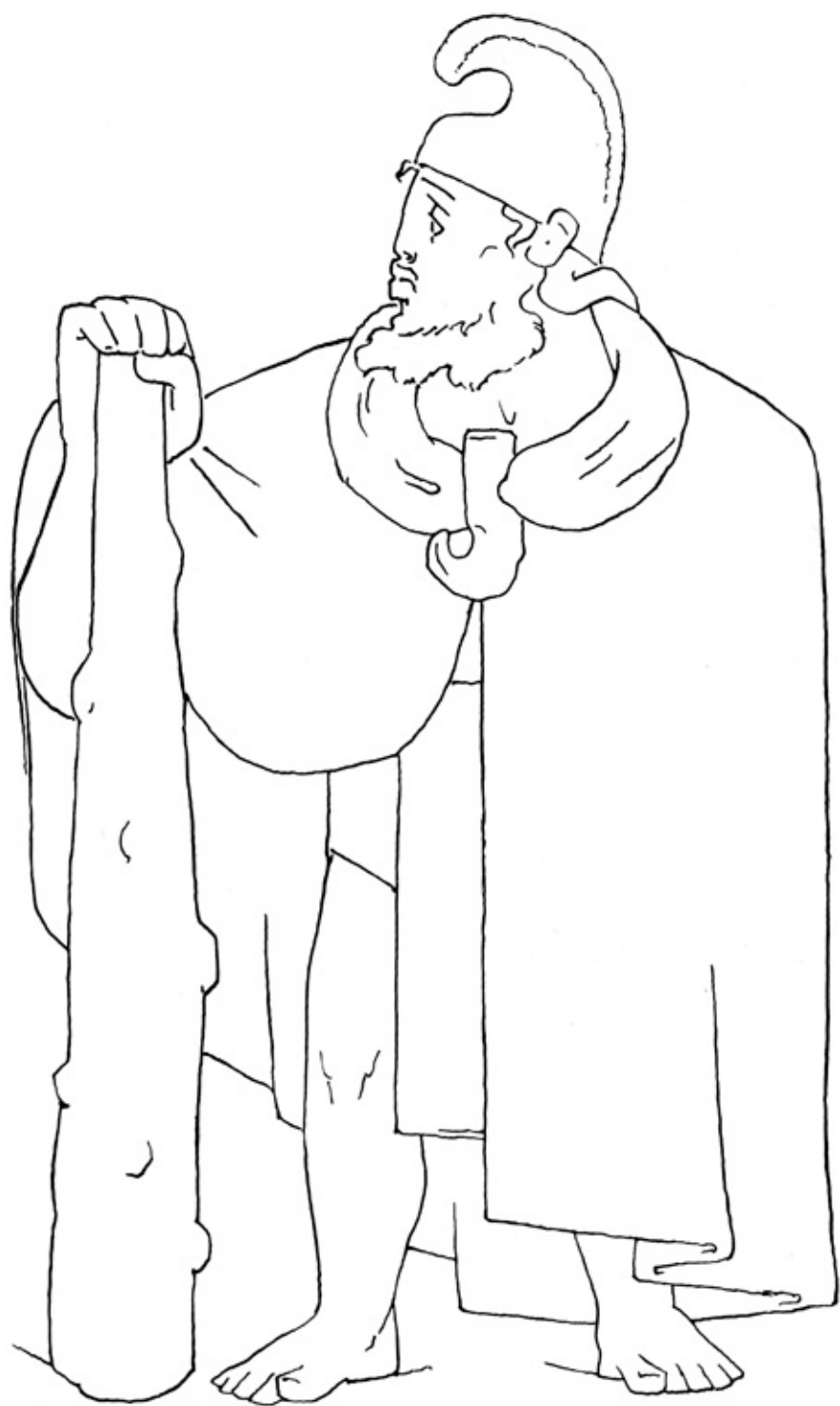
*(Apologetically)* Etiquette, sir, etiquette. Umi is a king, but he is below your station. He is a commoner. I should say, half a commoner. On his mother's side. It is well known the family eked a living raising chickens. Chickens, ha, ha, ha!

'AIKANAKA

*(In an absolute tantrum. Shaking fists, stomping his feet. Hysterically loud)* Shut up!

*(Frightened, the keeper of kapus hastily backs out.)*





## ACT TWO

*SCENE 2: The same hilltop, at dusk.*

*The sky on the horizon is a dusky pink that deepens to carmine at top. As the scene progresses, night should set in, rose change to mauve and carmine to a violet the color of violet ink. The hilltop is strewn with the flotsam of war. Broken weapons, smashed helmets, capes with a suggestion, or more than a suggestion, of the bodies they cover. All feather helmets and capes are the off-green that marks them as of Kauai. Weak moans, drumming, and the alarums of shell trumpets are heard off stage.*

*Seated in a reflective attitude on the center stone. 'Aikana-ka. He wears a green loincloth and is wrapped in an ample green feather cape. He wears a helmet of the same color. Around his neck is his very large whale-tooth necklace, and propped against the stone is his giant war club. His attitude, calm and concentrated, reminds one of that of a ko-nane player.*

*Three high chiefs are standing at the top of the hill, milling about rather aimlessly, in green feather capes and feather helmets. They pick up some of the weapons strewn on the ground, examine them, only to throw them down again. They lift some of the cloaks, as if to identify the dead, and replace them hurriedly.*

**'AIKANAKA**

*(Speaking quite calmly to nobody in particular and without looking at anyone) How many remain?*

(A CHIEF approaches.)

CHIEF

(With bitterness) Of the men, none. Many died. When they heard the omens and saw the portents, the rest deserted.

'AIKANAKA

(Factually) Of course. What of the chiefs and the champions?

CHIEF

No one deserted, sir, unless to die could be called that in your time of need. But luck was not with us. In single combat, Umi alone slew three of the best--Kaulunui, sir, Kauluiki, and Kauluwaho. Kaululoko is alive down there in the ditch, but maimed enough to be called dead. At present, Kaulu'ai'ole is battling down there. He is twice as big and twice as strong as Umi, and yet ... (Strokes of war clubs are heard off stage, still distant) Umi rushes him this way. Perhaps you should arm yourself, sir.

*(King shrugs. A huge man stumbles up the slope and half collapses. He is quite out of breath. It is KAULU'AI'OLE. His gray-green cloak and helmet are muddy and bloody. He holds his war club in the left hand. Much blood on the right side of his head, where his ear had been. The little finger of his right hand is missing and hand and arm are bloody. As he puts his right foot on the ground to raise himself on one knee, one sees that his right foot is also a bloody mess.)*

*(He squats at last, and taps his war club forcefully on the ground.)*

KAULU'AI'OLE

Food, food! Drink, drink!

*(One of the chiefs brings him a tall calabash of food and a calabash cup of awa. With a great deal of animal energy, much slurping and belching, the wounded warrior eats and drinks. Satisfied at last, he wipes his mouth with a bloody forearm.)*

## 'AIKANAKA

*(Severely)* Kaulu'ai'ole, if you are dead, you eat too much. If you are alive, you should be down there fighting.

## KAULU'AI'OLE

*(His feelings hurt)* I am going back. We called a truce at dinner time. King Umi, too, wanted to eat. I earned my keep.

## 'AIKANAKA

*(Mollified and dryly amused)* Where is your ear? Where is your little finger? What happened to your toe?

*(Kaulu'ai'ole rubs his ear stump, checks the state of his maimed hand and foot. He laughs.)*

## KAULU'AI'OLE

Ho! Ho! That's a good one. Would you believe it, sir, it's news to me. Oh, well! Those little appendages are not really part of one. They stick out too far. So, pfui, a fine stroke of a war club shaves them off. A good man, that Umi. Puny as he is, he makes me feel like a scraped hog ready to be cooked, its foot split and its ear nicked in honor of the god. *(Shakes head to clear it, gets up)* Thanks for the food and drink. *(Beats a tattoo on his belly)* I am full. *(He picks up his war club.)*

*(Off stage, not far away, Umi is heard humming the following gently but tauntingly.)*

## UMI

Come, little brother. Oh! how we miss you. Say Kaulunui, and Kauluiki, and Kauluwaho. Now it has eaten its fill, what a shame That the pig be cooked stuffed with its own dung.

## KAULU'AI'OLE

What a tease, that one. I wish I had brains, too. Then I could answer back.

*(Descends off stage to meet Umi. Soon the clash of war clubs is heard, then a bellow, then silence.)*

## 'AIKANAKA

*(Quiet despair)* Umi offers fat sacrifices to his god. Cheap too, as all the hogs are mine. I thought that my god was blind. I fed him sick fowls and rotten breadfruit. I was a fool.

*(With sudden decision and much dignity, the king stands up and unties his long feather cloak. The chiefs present are very alert now. The king carefully folds his cloak, signals to a chief, who receives the cloak from the king with great respect. King keeps his helmet on.)*

## 'AIKANAKA

The three of you, go to the caves and hide until I call you. On your way, stop at the temple and give to the god, from me, my cloak. Tell him to be patient. Tell him that tomorrow he shall have a king to eat, Umi, King of Hawaii.

*(The little group hesitates uneasily, then exits. The king seizes his war club, full of energy now. Off stage, Umi's taunting voice hums.)*

## UMI

Say, 'Aikanaka, man-eater,  
Are there many of you up there?

*(King shrugs his shoulders. He practices strokes of his war club, or rather a single stroke, raising with both hands the club over his head and swinging it down with great force, his legs wide apart.)*

## UMI

*(Umi speaking as if to himself, but too loud)* Nobody answers. If they are all dead, why go up?

## 'AIKANAKA

*(Stentorian bellow)* I am here.

## UMI

*(Humming)*

Say, 'Aikanaka, man-eater,  
Shall we make peace and be brothers?

*(King goes on practicing with the club, not even shrugging his shoulders.)*

UMI

*(Humming)*

Say, man-eater, 'Aikanaka,  
I'll let you choose one of my wives.

'AIKANAKA

*(Bellows)* Come up here and fight. I'll have all your wives when you are dead. *(Wipes sweat off his face.)*

UMI

*(Spoken in a conciliatory tone)* 'Aikanaka, man-eater, I'll do as you say. Here I come with a little present for you.

*(Relieved now that action is at hand, 'Aikanaka plants his two feet solidly apart on the ground and holding his club over his head ready to strike, waits. There is a great majesty in his attitude now, and in his statue-like immobility. He faces the spectators.)*

*(Over the edge of the hill Umi appears. He is in full war array with red malo, red feathercloak, and helmet. Casually thrown over one shoulder is the gray-green cloak of 'Aikanaka. Umi wears no weapon whatsoever.)*

*(Without even glancing at 'Aikanaka, Umi strolls at leisure toward the stone. He takes the folded green cloak off his shoulder and only now looks at the king. Puzzled but wary, 'Aikanaka slowly brings his club down until its head touches the ground, but otherwise does not modify his fighting stance. His head is turned toward Umi.)*

UMI

Is it yours? I found it lying on the road. I thought you would be pleased to get it back. *(Pause)* You don't look pleased. A beautiful cloak. What a pity it is spoiled. *(Spreads it carefully over the stone. There is a large blood stain on it)* You won't have it for the fight. Oh well! I'll

take mine off, too. All those things do, after all, is get in the way. *(Gets his own cloak off and carefully spreads it over 'Aikanaka's.)*

*('Aikanaka has changed his stand. Now he stands at rest, feet crossed and leaning his chin over his two hands that rest on top of the war club held vertically. The length of the club should be such as to fit the posture. He looks very much like Hercules. Umi sits on the stone.)*

UMI

That thief who stole your cloak, the last words he said were "the temple." Well I was curious, so I went there. I even peeked at the offerings under the banana leaves. What do you think I found? *(A gentle laugh)* Two mangy dogs and a rotting bunch of bananas. *(Reprovingly)* Now, man-eater, that is a foolish thing to do. Especially while you are at war. And today of all days. *('Aikanaka stirs)* Don't tell me you don't know what day this is. *(Mock surprise)* No! My, what an impious king. Today is the day when the feather on top of the head of the gods is replaced by a new one. At home, we do it in the grand manner: a real celebration. But here, on someone else's island, and a someone not very friendly at that, it was a poor show. I just changed the feather, and that was that. *(Out of the edge of his malo he picks up a feather)* Not very impressive, I'll admit. Some would say it was only a feather. Others say that hidden in that old feather there still lives the power of the god. Men will bicker about anything.

'AIKANAKA

*(Impatiently)* Come and fight. *(Points to the weapons on the ground)* I have more weapons than men. Pick any war club you like.

UMI

*(Getting up)* Man-eater, you don't pay any attention to what I say. I picked a weapon. Here it is. *(Shows feather)* Just a little chicken feather. *(Puts feather carefully back into edge of his malo.)*

'AIKANAKA

(Afraid now. Bitterly) Funny man.

UMI

Not really. Here I come.

*(King takes his war stance, legs apart, club's head touches the ground. Umi takes a similar stance, close to and facing the king. As 'Aikanaka faces the spectators, Umi turns his back on them. Umi takes his helmet off.)*

UMI

That should make it easy for you.

'AIKANAKA

(Bellows) Fight!

UMI

Fight yourself. I see, if you gave me your great big stroke now, that wouldn't be much fun. Well, then, don't be a hog. *(Signals the top of his head)* Here, just a tap, that'll be enough to keep me quiet for a while.

*('Aikanaka does just that. He raises the club just a little over Umi's head. Umi does not stir. Club is now let fall of its own weight. There is a thud. Umi, obviously dazed, half falls to the ground, and shakes his head as would a boxer after a knockout. This time, the king does not wait for instructions. A sadistic expression distorts his features. Heavy breathing. He raises the club once more, ready for the final blow. As the club is raised over the king's head, Umi slides between his legs, which are wide apart. Umi is now at the king's back. He has taken hold of the necklace and twists the heavy strands. Though he suffocates and shakes his head violently, 'Aikanaka does not let go of the club or change his position until the club has described its full arc and its head touches the ground. Only then do his hands let go of the club. They clutch at the necklace in*



*vain. 'Aikanaka collapses and rolls forward until he is center stage, his body parallel to the edge of the stage.)*

*(Umi, bending one knee, carefully unties the necklace of the dead king and ties it around his own neck. It is a solemn gesture, signifying the new kingship that is now his. He straightens up, and puts his foot gently on the king's neck.)*

*(Now, he takes the feather out of his malo, and raising it lets it fall. It flutters down and settles on 'Aikanaka's body.)*

UMI

*(Softly)* Indeed a chicken can sit on a king.





## ACT TWO

SCENE 3: *A cave by the sea, Molokai.*

*From inside the cave we look out over the ocean into the clear blue sky. Ferns garland the wet rock of the walls. Right foreground, a white boulder, the size of a man and roughly prismatic in shape, is propped up on a pile of stones. It is girded with a red rag as a sort of loincloth. Laid at its base are small bundles of offerings wrapped in ti leaves. Sound of surf ominously mixed with jarring dissonances.*

*A few FISHERMEN squat dejectedly, their nets idle. One scrapes a coconut with a clam-shell scraper. One busies himself rubbing firesticks.*

### FISHERMAN

Our shark-god has gone crazy. Day after day we lay our offerings before its sacred stone: one for each throw of the net; one upon the return of each fishing canoe. Still the god runs amuck. It spurns fish flesh. Human meat is its one craving. Again today it upset a canoe. Over and above the pounding of the waves one hears giant jaws snapping expectantly, ready for more unoffered sacrifices. Schools of fish, sensing the madness of the god, have fled our fishing shoals. No use throwing our nets any more. King Umi has heard of our plight. He is on his way. Up to now he has ordered the affairs of men with power and wisdom. Will he now dare order the affairs of the gods?

*(Enter Umi and a vanguard of warriors. All are in war array, with feather cloaks and helmets, and armed with war clubs. Fishermen hopefully prostrate themselves.)*

UMI

This cave reverberates sound unusually. To the rhythm of the surf it adds something all its own: a menacing something that could be the grinding of teeth against teeth. It may well be some sort of illusion, and again it may not. *(To fisherman)* What news?

FISHERMAN

Another canoe lost, with five lives. Now one third of our men are gone. Famine begins.

UMI

*(Goes to boulder)* The shark-stone is decorously adorned. Offerings are properly laid. Obviously, the guilt is all the god's. The shark-king is breaking the truce as would an earthly king. I know what to do with rebellious chiefs. But can one speak of a rebellious god? One thing is sure: in such a new kind of war earthly champions and weapons shall prove to be out of place. *(Umi takes off cloak and helmet and gives them to attendant, together with his war club)* Wisdom suggests that gods, never having had to grow up, are better met with childish weapons. Give me the bow reserved for rat-hunting, and the boyish sling we brought for just that purpose.

*(Assistant gives Umi a tiny bow made of a bent stick and string, and a small sling made with a forked stick. Umi signals for his followers to go. Exit followers.)*

UMI

*(To fishermen)* You also. Already too many of you have fattened the god. But leave here your firesticks and the coconut scraper. This may turn out to be a war of many weapons.

*(Fishermen exit. Off-stage sounds wax threateningly.)*

UMI

*(Loudly)* Shark-god, Uhumaka'ika'i, I, King Umi, am quite alone now. Come out and fight. Or send your champions, be they beasts or demons!

*(Off-stage noises stop suddenly. Nothing happens. Umi now goes to god-stone and scatters offerings with his feet, stomping on some. Off-stage noises resume loudly.)*

UMI

*(Softly)* You didn't like that, did you? *(Umi now kneels in front of the firesticks, rubbing the one against the other. At the end of his speech there will be a small flame, as of a match. Talks as he works)* Truly, shark-god, I am frightened. It is hard for a king to know himself to be only a man. For a king to see himself as a chunk of meat is harder still. So great a king as I am, yet what a small mouthful for such a king as you. Your realm is of water. Mine is of earth. I'd rather your water and my earth did not overlap, but they do, you know. Neighbor, to obtain peace I could bribe you with tributes less rustic than those of my people: enemy chiefs slain in combat, fit even for the taste of the highest gods. But you should ask, you know, and you should wait. Wait for champions, born for war, to die in war. It is mean of you, it is senseless of you, to grab and to mangle commoners, men meant for peaceful tasks. Had you swallowed whole armies of mine, I could still forgive you. But never shall I allow the murder of even one of my fishermen to go unpunished. I hate bullies, be they men or gods.

*(Umi now cradles in cupped hands the new flame that glows at the end of one of the firesticks. He piles up a few sticks of kindling wood, puts them afire. Blows on fire until it glows. On top of the small pyre he puts a single pebble.)*

UMI

*(To himself as he works)* I have always felt friendly toward fire. As if I could trust it to take my side, as some sort of secret ally.

*(While Umi talks, suddenly the space seen through the opening of the cave unnaturally deepens from sky-blue to dark violet. Dimly seen, fish forms swim through it and vanish. Then teeth grow that line the opening of the cave, until it becomes an open giant mouth. Inside it, dark violet turns to blood-red. For the first time, Umi rises and looks at the changed cave.)*

UMI

Truly an awesome sight. Magic displays are but child's play for the gods. To match them, humans can attempt little more than childish doings.

*(Now Umi holds the fire stick as if it were an arrow. Carefully adjusting it to the string of the rat-bow, he draws the bow, loosely aiming between the open jaws, and shoots. There is hardly power enough to carry the stick to its goal. Yet, as it lands, a blinding flash is seen and a thunderous noise is heard. Diminishing sequence of rumblings and light flashes as if the tiny fire arrow proceeded a great distance and depth. At right, the shark-stone is shaken as if by an earthquake, and topples over forward, settling lengthwise.)*

UMI

I thought so. Fire has no love for water.

*(Now, coconut-scraper in hand, Umi squats before the fallen shark-stone and scrapes it vigorously, gathering the scrapings in a small calabash cup. Jarring sound of scraping is amplified out of all proportion to what Umi is doing, and reverberated in depth. As Umi finishes, he gets up, calabash in hand. One sees the white shark-stone liberally splotted with dark blood, its red rag torn aside. Umi tastes of the scrapings out of the calabash, chewing noisily.)*

UMI

I must say this one weapon of yours I did not expect. You taste awful. Well, perhaps shark meat raw is not shark at

its best. A thorough cooking may improve you, O mute god. Ah! Pigs slowly cooked in the *imu*, their bellies filled with red-hot stones, how tender their meat. Why not give yours an equal chance?

*(Umi goes to the smouldering small fire and retrieves the hot pebble, with mimicry of burning his fingers. Puts the stone in the sling and aims it at the open jaws. As he lets go, amplified sound reverberates as if the stone were a boulder ricocheting away and downward, to great distance and depth. Smoke issues from the jaws. The shark-stone rolls over sidewise of its own, blackened as if in a fire. Now, the teeth that line the opening retract. The opening of the cave is just as it was before. Again the sky is seen. It is now a pink evening sky. No off-stage sounds.)*

#### UMI

What a peaceful sight. Come, come, King Shark. Lying there in shamed nakedness, scraped as any pig, and half-cooked already. Are you the one god that is of a forgiving nature? Or, rather, are you the crafty one, wishing for your champion to take me unaware? What kind of champion shall it be? What fearful correspondence, of which you alone hold the secret, binds creatures of the earth or creatures of the air to your command? *(Looks at evening sky)* Our fight has lasted a long time. Soon, night will fall. *(Musingly)* Creature of earth, creature of air, creature of night. Whom your champion may be is not a guess any more.

*(Quickly Umi crouches behind the pile of stones at right. Immediately a dark creature drops from upper regions. It has no definite head or body, is seemingly made of the spread of two bat wings. It flattens itself against the entrance of the cave, wings extended, cutting off all light.)*

#### UMI

*(Humming, from his hiding place)* Iole manu, Iole lele, rat-bird, bird-rat, bat! You smell blood. You smell blood. *(Sound of sniffing. Bat wings quiver. Wailing)* My blood, bat-bird, rat, my blood! See how I lie in my blood!



Oh! How the shark-god has mangled me. Flesh bit, flesh shredded, flesh swallowed. Lying here so powerless, truly more blood than flesh. Maimed, dying, all blood.

*(Umi throws a pebble in the direction of the shark-stone. It hits ground with a clank. A victorious shriek and the "bat" is spread-eagle flat over the shark-stone enfolding it with its wings. Sibilant sucking noises. Through the opening of the cave, sunset lights the scene.)*

UMI

*(Standing up, speaking quietly)* Rat-bird, bird that crawls, rat that flies, does it taste like a human? *(Sucking noise stops)* The blood of the master is death to the slave. Bat, rat, or demon, you are sick. The blood of the shark-god is death to such as you. Fly away, fly away. It may still be time to beg for its forgiveness. Hurry, though.

*(Moaning, the shape folds up its spread wings and disappears upward. Dusk sets in.)*

UMI

*(Squatting by the shark-stone)* May I suggest, O shark-god, neighbor king, that earth and water live at peace. The copious bleeding must have cured your fever. Surely you are sane again. See to it that the fish return to our fishing shoals. Be content, as you should be, with small offerings set before you by simple men. Peace, indeed, stay with you.

*(Sound of surf, now rhythmically peaceful. Torch bearers, fishermen, and soldiers appear at cave's entrance.)*

UMI

*(Rising)* I had a long chat with the god. Tomorrow, tuna shall again be plentiful, and seaworthy your canoes. Honor the god. His shrine needs repairs.

*(Fishermen straighten the fallen boulder, tie its loincloth, gather at its base the scattered offerings. Before Umi exits with soldiers, he calls back from the entrance of the cave.)*

Farewell, friends.





## ACT TWO

SCENE 4: King Hakaiki's banana grove. Maui.

*The stalks of the trees are short, and the beautiful yellow-green leaves are clearly displayed. At right, three stalks have been cut down to stumps of unequal heights. Coming from the left is heard the noise of the waves. Beached foreground left is a very small outrigger canoe in dilapidated state. A broken paddle lies against it.*

*Center stage, a mat. On the mat, lying on her belly, face to the spectators, the princess. She is wrapped up, or rather rolled up, in a vast tapa cloth the size of a double-bed sheet. Her hair is wet, and hangs over her features, hiding them. She snuffles copiously.*

*At her sides, the King of Maui, HAKAIKI, and his QUEEN. Both are gray-haired and both are potty. Both are wrapped "à la Roman" in tapa cloaks of a weak pink hue. Both, kneeling, raise their arms in despair, and repeatedly utter the heartbreaking "auwe," the Hawaiian equivalent of "alas." Though, by our standards, they seem to be hamming it, it is obvious that their despair is most real. Between laments, the queen dries the princess' hair with a tapa towel, and pushes it back away from her face. When the princess' features are seen, one sees that she is crying her heart out as unashamedly as a baby. There are three servants waiting on the royal family. It is all family-like, with only a minimum of etiquette.*

## KING

*(Attempting to scold his daughter)* Of all the dumb things you could do, daughter, that was the dumbest. King Umi treated you well, as queens go, or so I understood. I thought he liked you fine. I even thought you liked him.

## QUEEN

Auwe! And the danger she took crossing the seas on that little outrigger what-not, all alone, and that rotten log leaking all over! And now she sneezes.

## PRINCESS

*(Between sobs)* Mamma, that was the only canoe I could steal!

## KING

But dear, I explained it all to you last year when I sent you there. We cannot afford to make war with Umi. Your husband is the most powerful man on earth and what do you choose to do? You run away from him! That means war!

## PRINCESS

*(In a tantrum now, kicking her feet and her fists against the mat)* I don't like him at all. I don't want to see him. I don't want to talk to him, and I don't want to live with his ugly old queens. *(Forcefully)* They stink!

## QUEEN

Tell us, dearest, what did he do?

## PRINCESS

*(Unburdening her heart at great speed)* He made fun of me. He made fun of me. He made fun of me. From the time we met, when he made me believe he was a fisherman. *(Dreamily)* That was nasty of him. *(Sniffles)* Yesterday he snatched my necklace--you know, mamma, the one you gave me. *(Queen nods a yes)* When he saw it wasn't whale-tooth, but wiliwili wood, he laughed. And then he said *(Imitating Umi)*, "In my kingdom, children wouldn't want such a fake to play with. An old woman wouldn't dare put one on, just in case some man would woo her in the dark by mistake and find out what it is she has around her neck."

He took my pretty necklace away and now I bet it's all broken up and I shall never see it again.

*(Sobs from the princess. King starts to say something but queen signals for him to be silent. The princess is quietening down.)*

#### QUEEN

He shouldn't have dearest. One hasn't seen a whale on our shores since the time of our great king, Hakaloa, and that is before I was born. So how could one get at their teeth? *(To king)* Maybe daughter is right. That was inconsiderate of our son-in-law.

#### KING

*(To servant)* Fetch the keeper of kapus.

*(Servant exits.)*

#### QUEEN

*(To princess)* Be reasonable, lovely. Be reasonable, my flower lei. O please, my blossom of lehua, be reasonable.

*(Servant returns with KEEPER OF KAPUS. He is portly and mature. A fisherman's loincloth is his only apparel. He carries over one shoulder a heavy net that drags to the ground behind him. In one hand he has a fisherman's harpoon.)*

#### KEEPER OF KAPUS

*(Formally, and with a token bending of the knee)* Sir, you sent for me.

*(King points to the princess. She is quiet now and the queen fans her with a banana leaf. Queen signals that king and keeper of kapus should move farther away. They go into a huddle. Gestures, but no sound. Then:)*

#### KING

Couldn't we get hold of that fellow who acted as ambassador? He was so impressive. We could send him to Umi to beg for peace. Of course, we have nothing to bargain with. I am sure that Umi doesn't want the girl back.

## KEEPER OF KAPUS

That fellow was lent us by the king of Oahu. They are real sophisticates there. No way to get him here in time.

## KING

*will be*  
It is war, then. Very well. Tabu all private work. Gather all available men into a troop. We'll try to drill them somehow.

## KEEPER OF KAPUS

*if*  
Sir, you forget. This is surfing time on the other side of our island. When Umi invades the kingdom everybody will be on the other side, surfing. You know how it is with us, sir, surfing before war. *(Thinks it over. Shrugs)* And so it should be.

## KING

We have feather capes and helmets.

## KEEPER OF KAPUS

True. Kept in storage since the death of our great king, Hakaloa. Maybe the rats haven't eaten them all. I'll see.  
*(Exits.)*

## QUEEN

*go*  
*(To princess)* I'll get you twenty new tapa skirts, the perfumed kind. I'll give you my head-lei of yellow 'o'o feathers, the same our great king, Hakaloa, gave his favorite queen, my grandmother. It's a beauty, and very rare. Then we'll send you back to King Umi and maybe he'll take you back.

## PRINCESS

I don't want to go back. He made fun of my pimple, too.

## QUEEN

Auwe!

*(Enter keeper of kapus. Instead of a net he now carries a folded feather cape over one shoulder. A boy follows him holding a feather helmet. Both cape and helmet are of the weak pink hue of the king's tapa cloak.)*

## KEEPER OF KAPUS

I found them all right. The rats didn't like the taste.

## KING

*(Stroking cloak)* Unmatched heirlooms. Any king could envy us such treasures! *(Scratches his chin)* Now what do we do? *(Goes to look at stumps of banana trees and meditates. To boy)* Give me a stick.

*(The boy gives the king a short stick. King drives stick horizontally through one of the stumps at shoulder height. He hangs the feather cloak over the stick. On top of the stalk he places the helmet, backs away from his dummy warrior and looks at it with concentration.)*

## KING

Auwe! It wouldn't fool a fool!

## KEEPER OF KAPUS

And Umi is no fool. Auwe!

## PRINCESS

*(Cheerfully)* Papa, I think it's real pretty.

## KING

How many have we in store?

## KEEPER OF KAPUS

Many, sir. The cloaks are piled to the rafters. The helmets are as many as... the enemy skulls that our glorious king, Hakaloa, ordered left on the battlefield to celebrate his victories.... Well, maybe one hundred.

## KING

You and the boy, and as many children, old men, and women as are left, go get them. Do what I did. Rig them up along the coast where Umi's lookouts are sure to sight them. On top the cliffs, plant a few like watchers. Down the valley, scatter some like men in ambush. Prop the rest up on the beach, as a sort of heroic vanguard. Umi will be even a greater fool than my daughter if he falls for it, but what else can we do? *(Goes to a tree and selects a bunch of bananas)*



I'll take this bunch to the temple and offer it to the god. He surely has been nice to farmers and to fishermen. But without teeth, how can he bite? I believe he wouldn't care to crunch a cricket. *(To queen and princess)* Go. From now on you hide in the house. This is war.

*(When the princess gets up, the tapa skirt is much too long, and she hops as in a sack race, with the help of her mother. Stops.)*

PRINCESS

*(Hopefully)* Do you think he'll come?

KING

My guess--he is on his way. He is going to kill us all and make fishhooks from our bones, that's what. And he'll cut you in little pieces and use your flesh for bait if ever he sees you rigged up like that!

PRINCESS

Auwe! *(Exits hopping.)*





## ACT TWO

SCENE 5: Same set. Same lighting. Next day.

*The outrigger canoe has been removed. Instead of one dummy soldier and two stumps, there are now three dummies. As make-believe they are a failure; one of the stumps is too tall and two are too short. Off stage left, the sound of waves. King and keeper of kapus are watching the off-stage ocean with intense concentration.*

### KEEPER OF KAPUS

What a sight, sir, what a sight! What a magnificent sight! Umi's fleet on the go is awesome enough to induce terror in a god. I am glad I saw it before I die.

### KING

A tactless remark. I feel it in my bones. Poor bones, they rebel at being carved into fishhooks. Or maybe sliced thin and incrustated in the king's spittoon. Or he may prefer to use me as a sacrifice to his war god. Can you picture me lying there, scraped, and wrapped up in banana leaves? The taste of gods is not for man to criticize, but ... (Shivers) Our little god, he eats fruits exclusively.

scribble

### KEEPER OF KAPUS

*(Has not paid attention to the king so intensely has he been watching)* Sir, I counted them. Four hundred war canoes. Twenty thousand men at a guess, counting paddlers.

### KING

*(Glumly)* I hope they like bananas.

*(The queen enters, joins the men long enough to appreciate what they see. Wails.)*

QUEEN

Auwe! *(Queen exits.)*

KEEPER OF KAPUS

*(Suddenly very excited)* Look, sir, look! Something strange is happening. Sails that were taut in the wind are slack. Paddlers now change the rhythm of their strokes.

KING

I wished too hard. What I see, it cannot be. I've watched so long that my eyes have gone mad. *(Rubs his eyes.)*

KEEPER OF KAPUS

I see it, too. Their fleet is turning away. Could our dummy army have fooled them?

KING

Even I can't believe that. But perhaps my fisherman god did cast fish scales in their eyes. That could do it.

KEEPER OF KAPUS

It is a rout. They are fleeing. See the foam their paddles raise. What a sight!

KING

Wait, one ship has not turned. It is coming at us full speed. What power!

KEEPER OF KAPUS

It is the king's own, famous the world over. It holds, or so they say, four hundred warriors, with food enough to reach Kahiki.

KING

We are lost. It has anchored now, only waiting for the tide. They'll come and finish us. *(Conch shell trumpets off stage)* Making ready for a landing....

KEEPER OF KAPUS

Look again.

## KING

There's a fellow jumped overboard. Swimming like a fish, like the great fish-god himself. Look at the spray he throws in his wake--white and curved like the tusks of a giant boar.

## KEEPER OF KAPUS

(*Fearfully*) Only one man can swim like that.

## KING

Umi. (*King goes center stage to the mat of the princess, picks up towel and turns back toward the beach*) Hospitality is a king's duty, especially in wartime. Let him get dry before he kills us.

(*A great rush of water and a splash are heard. Umi enters from left as if just arising from the sea. He wears only his red loincloth, with the flaps tucked in for better swimming. Around his neck a small pouch hangs on twine. Also, loosely knotted, a single strand of rope. King offers towel.*)

(*Umi takes it without thanks and dries himself at leisure. Tosses the towel back toward the king. Then falls to the ground, touching his head to it in prostration.*)

## UMI

(*Theatrically*) Pity, O renowned Hakaiki, so worthy of your famed ancestor, Hakaloa. We have fallen into your trap, O king. My spies had reported but small doings in your kingdom. It was a land of farmers and fishermen, they said. The fools! Tell me before I die, O king! How did you craftily contrive to raise and train such an enormous army! It fills the top of your cliffs. It spills into your valleys. On your beaches so numerous are your champions that the sand can hardly be seen. As morning dawned, what our spies saw filled them with awe. Instead of the expected green of your banana groves, there spread the pink terror of your feather-cloaked might. Only by speed and a shameful flight could my ships escape your wrath. (*Umi rises now and presents his wrists held together*) Tie me up, O king. I am your prisoner.

## KING

*(In a daze, to keeper of kapus)* You have a rope?

*(Keeper of kapus looks around helplessly. Umi takes the rope off his neck and amiably offers it to the keeper of kapus.)*

## UMI

I brought one with me, just in case. . . .

*(Keeper of kapus ties Umi's hands. Queen and princess enter. Queen is dressed as she was before. Princess is beautifully groomed. She wears a short skirt of patterned tapa and a pink shawl. On her head, her mother's own lei of yellow feathers. No necklace. Behind queen and princess enter timidly the servants, boy, etc.)*

*(Umi does not look at anyone. He stands, hands tied and head bowed.)*

## QUEEN

*(Indignantly to king)* What do you think you are doing?

## KING

*(Whispering)* He asked me to.

## QUEEN

*(Goes toward Umi)* No sir, no sir. There will be none of that in our kingdom.

## PRINCESS

*(Icily)* I think father is quite right. The man is a prisoner of war. Keep him tied until sacrificed to the god.

*(King and queen look horrified. Queen desists from untying Umi. Princess strolls to Umi.)*

## PRINCESS

*(Casually)* Well now, so this is the soldier you caught. Not a bad-looking fellow, at that. *(Musingly)* Papa, when is the sacrifice to take place? Could the god wait until morning?

KING

*(Weakly)* Daughter, what sacrifice? There hasn't been one since the time of Hakaloa. By now our beloved god is toothless. Best he can do is chew on bananas.

PRINCESS

*(Very haughtily)* A pity. How shall we dispose of the prisoner then?

KING

I don't know.

UMI

*(Raises his head. Amiably)* Maybe I can help. I have a suggestion. A prisoner who is also a king may regain his freedom with some sort of ransom. Maybe an annual tribute of produce. What would you people want?

KING

We need mats.

UMI

Mats it shall be then. But I am a sort of king of kings, you know. My tribute should be quite fancy. Could you people eat four hundred fat pigs?

KING

We sure would.

UMI

Still not fancy enough. I am a proud king. Would two fat queens thrown in please you, O king?

*(Princess suddenly claps hands for joy. Stops just as suddenly. King looks at queen dubiously.)*

QUEEN

But, of course! It'll be nice to have other queens to chat with. At times this can be a lonely place, as we all know.

KING

*(Relieved)* A bargain then. You are free.



UMI

Maybe you could untie me. I brought a little bonus for the princess.

PRINCESS

Papa, what are you waiting for?

*(King unties Umi. Umi goes to princess.)*

UMI

Hi, runaway wife. When you ran away, you forgot this.  
*(Out of the little pouch that hangs at his neck, Umi brings the tiny lei palaoa, puts it around the neck of the princess)*  
Truly, it is a pretty thing. I love it.

PRINCESS

*(Curtly)* Thank you.

*(Off stage, an alarum of conch-shell trumpets.)*

UMI

My men are getting restless. It is time I go.

KING

How shall you go back?

UMI

That's easy, swimming. For a man alone, it's no problem!  
*(Cheerfully)* Goodbye, all.

*(Sadness spreads over king and queen. Princess goes to Umi.)*

PRINCESS

*(Gently)* Goodbye, husband. You know, U, there is only one thing I'll regret: that is playing checkers with you. You are a good player, U, better than anyone at home. A last game?

UMI

*(Puzzled)* A quick one, then.

*(King claps hands. Two servants bring checker-board with checkers on top, arrange it center*

*stage, foreground. Umi and the princess lie down flat on the ground facing each other, hands to chin. King and queen and all present arrange themselves to watch game.)*

UMI

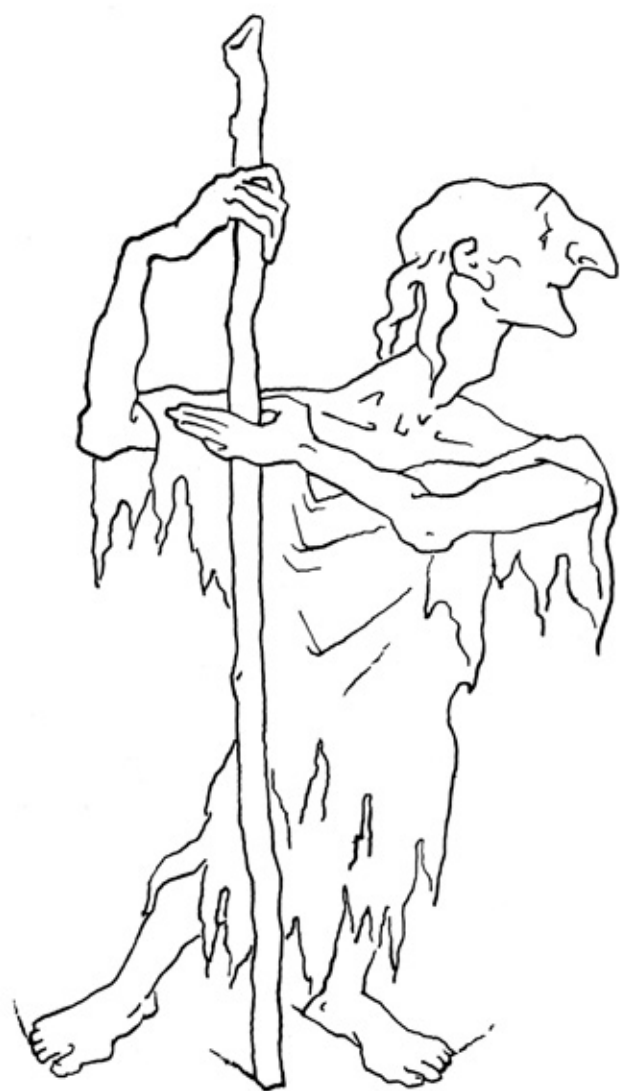
What wager?

PRINCESS

Oh, I thought of that. If I win, you'll be mine. If you win, I'll be yours.

UMI

Agreed. *(Game begins.)*



## EPILOGUE

*A volcanic landscape. Forty years later.*

*When, amidst thunderclaps, lightning strikes, one sees the skeletons of burned trees raised against the blood-red sky. At right, a black mass of piled-up lava. The ground itself is lava. Through the cracks of the cooled-off black crust, one sees the live glow of its fire core.*

*Lightning and a deafening thunderclap. Umi enters from left. He is in his sixties, with white hair close-cropped. He is in a thatched raincoat of straw, with a branch of a giant fern held over his head for protection. Umi stops as he enters, looks up at the sky. He unties his raincoat and spreads it over the lava to dry. Shakes fern branch to dry it. Holds hands to glowing cracks to warm them.*

UMI

A handy fire for a man as wet and cold as I am. What a journey, battling water and fire all the way. I am not as young as I used to be. I have been a king a long time. People say a great king, but I wouldn't know. I only know I did what I was born to do. One more thing was left. I am doing it now. *(Thunderclap. Lightning)* I am ill at ease all by myself. An old king is so rarely alone.

*(Another flash of lightning reveals a figure standing quite close to the king. It is the witch seen in Act II, Scene 4--dressed the same and holding*

*the same crooked stick. Only the top of her head is different. She is quite bald, with a few strands of hair falling down from the back of her head. Her voice also is changed. It is a young voice, and quite melodious.)*

WITCH  
Alone?

UMI  
It's you, old fake. I expected a goddess, not a witch. Once more we meet. Forty years ago you shook your stick at me. I became a king.

WITCH  
I made you a king.

UMI  
That is as good as any fisherman's boast. All you did was shake your stick at me.

WITCH  
How did your brother die?

UMI  
Why, he fell in the oven.

WITCH  
*(Coquettishly)* I like to play with fire.

UMI  
I see. I thank you. If it is not a great big thanks, it is that forty years at this job of being a king has taken the edge off the pleasure. Witch or goddess, whichever, I thank you. *(Takes another look at her)* You have aged, too. You are quite bald, though your voice has lost its croak.

WITCH  
*(Passes hand over her skull)* I may have to get a younger body soon. But I hate change. This one fits me so well, like an old feather lei. All the feathers may be bug-eaten, but a new lei would not feel as nice. You know, king, I love you. You have been a brave king, defending even the

humblest of your subjects from bullies. You have protected the catch of the fisherman from looters. Thanks to you, the widow and the orphan can sleep by the highway unmolested. What I like best, you have been kind to old women like me. Your sons and their sons perhaps shall take after you. As dynasties go, you took a chance, having only one queen. How is she?

UMI

*(With quiet pride)* Beautiful as ever.

WITCH

We chat and chat like old women. Why don't you come to the point? Why come at all?

UMI

Why say what you already know? Owning everything there is to own on earth is not enough. It concerns only the present. I would like to see the future.

WITCH

You may not like it.

UMI

I am a brave man, goddess. I know my dynasty shall not last forever. I know some, or all, of my kingly doings shall be undone. I know that some day the peace I leave my heir shall sour into war.

WITCH

What you expect and fear is not at all what the future has in store. Instead, from some far-off Kahiki, a new race, unspeakably different, shall land here. There shall be no war. Not hate but love shall be their weapon. Your people shall mate with the newcomers and what you have known shall be no more.

*the*

UMI

I didn't come for words. The seers in my service prophecy quite creditably. I came to see.

## WITCH

Very well. You asked for it!

*(Lightning and a deafening thunderclap. Absolute darkness on stage. When light reappears we see the open lanai of a hotel. The place: Waikiki. The time: today.)*

*For a backdrop, the coconut grove already seen in Scenes 2 and 5 will fit nicely. Center background, a low platform with a mike at the side. Scattered on the stage but leaving a clear path at the center, cafe tables. They are round ones, with a hole in the middle that holds a large canvas umbrella. These are in striking and contrasting colors, with stripes, polka dots, etc. Tourists are seated on metal chairs drinking and chatting. Just average, nice people in an unusual setting. Their clothing ranges from city clothes to muumuus worn with sandals, and to bathing suits. A few palm-leaf hats, some with paper flowers and others with straw birds dangling on stems. Leis, naturally.*

*Left foreground, a bar with the expected paraphernalia. The bartender, in white coat, red sash, and black pants, mixes drinks for waiters similarly attired. The waiters, with a great show of efficiency, carry the drinks on trays to waiting customers. One overhears shreds of conversation:*

## TOURISTS

Waiter, another gin and tonic.

What would they say if they could see me now?

Can you point out some natives for me?

Gee, they put an orchid in my drink!

*(On the platform are TWO WOMEN. One is a clothes model, quite professional in shape and in posture. The other woman, well groomed, talks into the mike. Her voice is refined by profession and vulgar by nature.)*

## WOMAN

... And this is the last dress of the series. It is a typical Hawaiian dress and is called a holoku. Note the peau-de-

soie cloth in bottle-green, with magenta frills at neckline and hem. *(For an instant, vulgarity wins)* Girls, see how it clings, but *(Signalling for model to turn around)* all along the back this handy zip. *(Cultured again)* At the hotel shop you may buy this wonderful dress for only \$74.75.

*(She signals for model to leave. Model exits slowly through the path left between tables, professional to the end.)*

#### WOMAN

This concludes our fashion show for today. I will now pass the mike to Mrs. Kealoha Smith. I thank you.

*(As woman leaves the mike, MRS. KEALOHA SMITH replaces her. She is a rather large woman, pleasantly Hawaiian. She hugs to her bosom a little ukulele. Her troop of dancers, in plastic grass skirts, hair loose, and decked with paper leis, file in on the stand at loose attention. Mrs. Smith first shows the ukulele, then talks into the mike. She is gracious, with a good dose of resignation.)*

#### MRS. SMITH

I will play on this typical Hawaiian instrument. Its name, ukulele, means "jumping flea." *(Weak giggles among the tourists)* And my girls will dance for you a typical Hawaiian hula. Again, by popular demand, it will be your favorite, this world-renowned master-tune, "Little Brown Gal."

*(Sustained applause at the announcement. Dance and strumming proceed. Some tourists join in the tune. Others essay the gestures. Much applause at the end.)*

#### MRS. SMITH

Thank you. And now I pass the mike to this charming gentleman we all know as Mike, your tour director.

*(As Mrs. Smith exits, MIKE gets on the platform. A businessman dressed in a businessman's suit, he wears an extravagant palm-leaf hat, with many paper flowers on it of all colors, and as many*

*[replace  
by my  
comic hula]*



*straw birds dangling from very long stems. Very weak applause.)*

# MIKE

First, folks, a most important announcement. Your plane leaves at six. The limousines will be at the hotel lobby at five. I suggest you all be downstairs with bags packed at 4:45. I will be at the hotel desk from four on, ready to smooth over what little problems you may have, each and every one of you. *(Heartily)* Now, let me tell you a little anecdote: a gentleman came here with one of my guided tours. Only when he arrived he left me. Now one shouldn't do that, you know. I don't care about the bonus, but I do care about your safety. Well, this gentleman--he was a very nice gentleman really--he spent a night in a place he didn't have marked on his itinerary. Next day he hurried back to me. He was sorry, he said, he had done that. So I says, "What happened?" and he says in the hotel--it was a cheap hotel, mostly natives go there--the desk clerk would say "Good morning, alohaha," and at night he would say "Sleep well, alohaha." So before leaving the hotel the gentleman asks the clerk, "I thought one said aloha, and not alohaha." So very politely the clerk says, "In Hawaiian, sir, aloha and alohaha are two different words. Aloha means "I love you." Alohaha means "Drop dead." *(Belly laugh. Heartily joined in by the tourists)* Well, folks, if I may say so, this has been an unusually successful and a rewarding tour. You ate poi and had a ride on a catamaran. You also went, however briefly, to other islands--Hawaii, Maui, Kauai--pleasure spots of the Pacific. *(A quick look at his wrist watch)* Well, folks, if you hurry packing, you'll still have time to relax on the beach. Before we do that, shall we try once more our skill at speaking the native lingo? I'll say it first, but be sure to repeat after me. *(Wagging his finger)* No slackers, now. *(He waves his arms as though he were a bandmaster)* Aloooooo--ha!

*(His "oooooo" is endless and he cracks the "ha" as if it were a whip. All tourists obediently repeat after him.)*

# TOURISTS

Aloooooo--ha! *(Applause and shy laughs.)*