

Sands of Lanikai

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SANDS OF LANIKAI

FADE IN:

EXT: HONOLULU, HAWAI'I - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A grand PALACE overlooks a tapestry of lush greenery. Towering KOA and PALM trees sway gently, whispering ancient secrets. A golden-spiked fencing encloses the manicured grounds, glistening in the Hawaiian sun.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Honolulu, Hawai'i. Iolani Palace - January 17, 1893"

In an upper window, a silk drape parts.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

The throne room is a breathtaking blend of opulence and rich cultural heritage. Plush crimson carpet flows beneath ornate gilded chairs. Large candelabras cast warm shadows off beautiful murals of ancestral royalty.

QUEEN LILI'UOKALANI (50s) stands by a window. Her fingers trail along the fabric as she gazes out. A storm brews in her soulful eyes. The weight of her people, bound by invisible chains of aloha, hangs heavily upon her.

Something ominous approaches, something insidious. It threatens the very peace she clings to, fights for...

The queen furrows a brow, presses her lips together.

With quiet steps, porters and servants shuffle to one side. The tension is palpable. BUTLER KHALE (60s), more friend than steward, approaches and stops.

KAHALE

Your Majesty, your guests have arrived.

Queen Lili'uokalani releases the drape, straightens.

QUEEN

(anxious)

Guests?

KAHALE

Iwalani. And, a young haole man.

QUEEN

I see.

(steadies herself)

Send them in.

The queen strides with a regal purpose toward her elevated throne. A GUARD swings open a grand wooden door. Pretty IWALANI KAMAKAWIWO'OLE (20s) bursts into the room, eyes sparkle with excitement. Handsome WILLIAM SANDS (20s) hesitates at the threshold. Unease washes over him as he surveys the grandeur. William gestures for her attention.

WILLIAM

Iwalani, we can't be here. It's not safe.

She glances back at him. Her eyes plead for his favor. Kahale steps forward, announces.

KAHALE

Miss Iwalani Kamakawiwo'ole and Mr. William Sands.

Iwalani can no longer contain herself. She rushes forward, kneels before the queen. William is slow to follow. He fidgets as if the room might swallow him whole. The queen extends a hand. Iwalani kisses it reverently.

QUEEN

It's wonderful to see you, my child. You're radiant. How is your sister?

IWALANI

She sends her aloha, your Majesty. You won't believe what I have to share.

QUEEN

Does this news involve your companion?

Iwalani glances back at William, whose rigid stance betrays discomfort.

IWALANI

Yes! William-

He glances toward the outside, shifts in place.

WILLIAM

Iwalani, perhaps you should-

Iwalani beckons him forward, her face lit up with enthusiasm.

IWALANI (CONT'D)

William works at the shipyard. I was there for fish, but then the rally started-

She looks up at him, searches for support. William swallows hard, braces himself.

IWALANI (CONT'D)

Just like you said. I was taking notes. But the Honolulu Rifles-

He struggles with how to voice his concern.

WILLIAM

Iwalani- tell the queen why I'm here.

With anticipation, the queen studies Iwalani.

QUEEN

(firmly)

The rally... and the riflemen?

The uneasiness escalates, charged with a promise of revelations to come.

EXT. IOLANI PALACE - DAY

A battalion of U.S. MARINES strides toward the imposing Iolani Palace entrance. Polished gear glints in the sharp light of the sun. The quiet rustling of palm fronds sway to their rhythmic footsteps, creating a disturbing harmony.

AMERICAN MILITIA follow in tight formation. An intensity radiates from their ranks. PALACE GUARDS, ashen with fear, raise rifles but waver.

Silence hangs in the balance - a quick retreat has the guards ascending palatial steps with wide eyes, seeking refuge within.

A BATTERING RAM slams against the entry gate. The crash echos like thunder. It bursts open with a collapse of spiked metal. Marines and militia take combat positions, train guns at the palace. Mechanical whirring cuts through the stressed atmosphere. A GATLING GUN swivels into place.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

Guards burst into the throne room to form a disciplined line. The QUEEN rises regally in response. Iolani and William step back and away.

CAPTAIN AKAMU (30s) loyalty etched on his features, rushes forward. He removes his helmet, kneels deeply, a blend of urgency and respect in his voice.

AKAMU

Your Majesty. The American haoles have soldiers arriving. Should we notify-

The queen straightens with resolve, a vulnerability beneath her facade.

QUEEN

No-

(pause)

No Hawaiian blood shed today.

She exhales, turns toward Iwalani, an edge of fear in her eyes.

QUEEN (CONT'D)

I'll prepare to meet them.

As she speaks, Iwalani steps forward.

IWALANI

But your Majesty, will they listen?

The queen holds Iwalani's gaze, a shared understanding.

QUEEN

Take the carriage- before it's too late.

Her command has weight. Iwalani nods once.

QUEEN (CONT'D)

(to guards)

Make it so.

STAIRS

The guards lead Iwalani and William down a swift flight of royal stairs, their faces set with determination. A GUARD opens a back door. The faint sound of approaching footsteps grows louder. An ADJACENT GUARD (30s) waves them forward.

ADJACENT GUARD

Hurry!

They slip through, the urgency propels them into the uncertain world outside.

INT. CARRIAGE - DAY

A CARRIAGE door swings open. Iwalani and William scramble up into the quilted compartment. They sit shoulder to shoulder. Iwalani clings to his arm, knuckles white.

IWALANI

What if they stop us?

Their eyes meet- his determined, hers haunted by uncertainty. The door SLAMS shut behind them.

EXT. CARRIAGE - DAY

The GUARD flicks the reins. The carriage careens forward as carriage WHEELS CREAK against the ground, kicking up dust. They veer away from the palace.

MILITIA rush into position. Rifles bristle through the fencing. The air erupts with the SOUND of GUNFIRE. Bullets WHIZ through the air. SMOKE curls up- thick and acrid- mingling with the sweet aroma of danger.

CARRIAGE

The jarring ride tosses them about. Iwalani leans out, eyes darting back toward the chaos erupting behind them. SPARKS from bullets ping off the carriage metal frame.

WILLIAM

(urgent)

Iwalani, get down!

William throws himself over her as a bullet strikes a shoulder. Iwalani gasps, her body folds against him, a marionette with cut strings.

IWALANI

(weakly)

William, I- I can't...

He cradles her, desperation threading through his voice.

WILLIAM
Hold on! We'll make it, I promise!

GATE

GUARDS swing open a back gate. Spooked horses rear up, the carriage leaps forward down the narrow path. The vehicle SCREECHES and sways, almost overturning.

It lurches into the open and onto the road beyond. As the carriage vanishes into the distance, the guards bolt the gate shut.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
(grips her hand)
I'm here for you. I'm here,
Iwalani.

A Hawaiian flag drops down low on a distant staff.

EXT. SS LURLINE - O'AHU, HAWAII - DAY

Steam trails tease the large outline of O'ahu, Hawai'i.

SUPERIMPOSE: "NOVEMBER 5, 1941"

The SS LURLINE slices through dark, roiling seas. In the background, a distant rumble hints at heavier tides. WILLIAM SANDS (70s) now frail, leans against a deck railing that overlooks the stern. He is weathered, yet reflective, eyes closed as he trembles, a face marked by years of memories.

WILLIAM
(softly)
I'm here Iwalani, I'm here.

PAUL SANDS (20s) approaches in silence from behind. Tall, handsome, athletic, he moves with an ease that contrasts his inner turmoil. A mask of confidence veiling deep-seated anger. Paul joins William at the railing, scanning through binoculars the tropical paradise.

PAUL
That must be Diamond Head.

WILLIAM
The memories... they come flooding
back.

PAUL
You've been here before?

WILLIAM
Long before your time.
(pauses, then softer)
You miss your mom and dad, don't
you.

Paul's grip on the binoculars tightens as a shadow casts across his face.

PAUL
You think its easy? I'm here aren't
I?

WILLIAM
A gift, this view... beautiful,
isn't it?

William rests a hand on his shoulder, seeking connection.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
The sands of the beach change with
each new wind. Listen closely-

Paul shifts his stance. Uncomfortable, he backs away.

PAUL
All I hear is my heart breaking.

WILLIAM
Let the ways of Aloha guide you-
it's a feeling, not just words.

PAUL
Enough with the secrets and the
sayings-
(squints through binoculars)
Is that a whale out there?

A sleek submarine breaks the surface, glistening like a steel shark with its RED DISC and I-24 INSIGNIA.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Japanese?

William's expression tightens, as he moves toward an access door, lingering for a moment.

WILLIAM
Aloha nui loa, my grandson. Our
bond is stronger than the tide.

He looks off into the distance, the weight of unspoken truths heavy between them.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

As promised, my heavenly seabird-together again.

He smiles, a mixture of sadness and hope, before slipping inside, unnoticed. Paul lowers the binoculars, as the certainty of the moment sinks in.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

William approaches a stateroom (bedroom) door. Passengers with luggage weave past him, their conversation a distant hum.

A faint discussion drifts from an adjoining stateroom. William pauses, intrigued. Cautious steps move him forward. He presses himself against the wall. William peers through the open door jam.

STATEROOM

ISAMU ANZAI (20s) Japanese, sinewy, predatory stares out a portal window. A smile creeps across his face, thoughts of power and control unfettered.

He turns toward OTTO KUEHN (40s) German, dark-eyed, withdrawn, who meticulously packs a suitcase on a bed, tension grabbing at his features.

ISAMU

They wait for us.
(pauses, assesses Otto)
You understand what's at stake?

Otto hesitates, a flash of uncertainty crosses his face.

OTTO

Ja, report on U-S Navy... but the risks-
(swallows hard)
We could be compromised.

ISAMU

Compromised? This is our chance. Seize the future- my future. With the correct information, we will defeat them.

Otto flinches at the implication, his hands shake as he packs.

OTTO

At what cost? Why should I risk everything for your ambitions?

ISAMU

They will never accept you. Are you willing to die for nothing?

Otto's eyes darken, betrayal in the air.

OTTO

Only for the information-
(stiffens)
I will not be your pawn.

Isamu leans in closer, his voice a lethal whisper.

ISAMU

Disappoint me and you won't live to tell.

Otto's bravado crumbles, resumes packing in silence. Isamu removes a SMALL POUCH from a pants pocket. Reaching inside, he removes a SMALL VIAL filled with a WHITE powder.

ISAMU (CONT'D)

If you're caught-

William leans in closer. A loud CREAK of a floorboard pierces the air. The old floor betrays him. Isamu's head snaps toward the sound. He catches sight of William.

ISAMU (CONT'D)

Someone's listening!

WILLIAM'S INTERNAL STRUGGLE

William's heart races: should he flee? The dark conspiracy holds him captive, the thought of Iwalani pulls him back.

WILLIAM

(Whispers to himself)
I can't let this go.

He reinforces himself but decides to run.

CORRIDOR

William bolts down the hall, adrenaline fueling his flight. The door flies open behind him. Isamu gives chase, the vial in hand, its glass gleaming menacingly in the dim light.

The pouch slips from his grasp. It bursts open, sending WHITE POWDER swirling like sinister snow adrift in the air.

SHIP DECK

William bursts through a ship hatch door, looks for an escape-

A HAND and SHOE prevent its closing. Isamu shoves the door open with a feral snarl. William stumbles back toward a railing. He backs up against it, salty air mixing with the scent of fear.

ISAMU

You cannot run from this!

Isamu lunges forward, throwing hard strikes as William struggles vainly to deflect them. The THUD of fists and the CREAK of the ship's motion only heighten the disorder.

Fingers grip his throat, William gasps, panic washes over him in waves. On the back of Isamu's hand, a SICKLE SHAPED SCAR. The contents of the vial spill into William's mouth.

ISAMU (CONT'D)

Now you die-

William chokes, grabs at his throat. His world narrows. Death seizes its opportunity. He falls to his knees, hands grasp at the air, as life deserts him.

WILLIAM

(fading)

No- not like this...

His vision blurs, the roar of the ocean fades. A last bit of strength- William reaches for a railing... he misses. Sliding down, the spirit is wrenched from him. A final breath escapes, its whisper lost to the winds of fate.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A body tumbles over the ship railing into the ocean below. Water crashes against the hull, reverberates, swirls and swallows. Paul, standing at the rail, stares wide-eyed into the waves, breath hitching in his throat. The world around him stands still, replaced by the chilling reality of what just occurred.

PAUL
(whispers)
Was that a body?

Pushing back from the rail, he steels himself, masking his inner turmoil beneath a layer of bravado.

EXT. HONOLULU PORT - LURLINE - PAUL - DAY - (LATER)

The harbor bustles with activity. The SS Lurline settles into its pier, greeted by a throng of enthusiastic onlookers. Many are garnished with colorful leis. They wave at the vessel, anxious smiles concealing an undercurrent of worry. A MARCHING BAND plays jubilant tunes while hula dancers sway rhythmically. Hawaiian men dive into the iridescent water.

PAUL
All these flowers- are we
celebrating or mourning?

Ramps are secured. Officials board, a large BANNER unfurls- A-L-O-H-A. Paul scans the crowd.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(voice lowers)
Was that really a Japanese
submarine? What if they come for
us?

He spins around.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Gramps? Grandpa?

Paul weaves through an indistinct mass of passengers who grow restless, some glance at him with rough expressions. Isamu and Otto loom nearby, their conversation sharp against the festive atmosphere.

ISAMU
(to Otto, low)
Everything's in place. They won't
know what hit them.

Paul brushes past Otto, overhears and narrows his eyes. He bumps into Isamu.

PAUL

Sorry.

He locks eyes with Isamu, who scowls. The crowd around them holds its breath, a sudden hush to their chatter.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(assertively)

What are you planning?

Isamu steps in closer.

ISAMU

Mind your business. It's not your fight.

The crowd shifts, sensing conflict. Paul's eyes narrow, the joy of arriving now tainted.

PAUL

It becomes my business if it threatens family.

He stands firm. Isamu smirks, a wild gleam in his eye, signaling this is far from over.

The energy of the departure slowly resumes around them.

EXT. LOCAL BEACH - DAY

HEALANI LUIS (20s) exotic, lithe and stunning, handles a well-groomed steed as it gallops along shoreline surf. Her supple figure radiates a deep sense of pride, as does a wisdom that belies her years. She rides tall in the saddle, an agile silhouette against the back drop of aqua-blue seas.

Healani brings the horse to a halt. The echo of rhythmic waves slices through the poetic calm. Her sharp eyes scan the shoreline, catching a glimpse of something drifting in the shallows. Unease claws at her heart.

HEALANI

(to herself)

What could that be?

With a refined, yet cautious move she dismounts. Opaque tide pools reflect her image as she inches closer.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

Clothing?

Healani leans in, drawn by curiosity. Her eyes widen in horror as she discovers the truth-

The body of William Sands sways in a shallow eddy, skin pale against the blue water- lifeless eyes fixated on the sky.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

Oh, my God.

The haunting rhythm of the waves clashes with her racing pulse... Healani recovers from the shock. She steps back, steadies her mount with a hand that trembles, and climbs on. Spurred on by a sense of urgency, she commands a gallop. The steed thunders away. SAND sprays from quickened hooves.

INT. HONOLULU POLICE STATION - DAY

The police station buzzes with an intensity that hangs thick in the air. A well lit room is partially open to a hallway, where checkered flooring gleams under the pulse of fluorescent lights.

The faint hum of a ceiling fan battles thick humidity. On a credenza, a fan whirs. It sends a weak breeze across the cluttered desk of-

OFFICER JACK BURNS

DETECTIVE

BACK TO SCENE

JACK BURNS (30s) is lanky, his sharp features showing a trace of stubbornness. The meticulous nature demands respect, though his willed indifference hides an earnestness held hostage within.

Jack sifts through the pile of paperwork, an unlit cigarette dangles from his mouth like a forgotten thought. A RINGING telephone jolts him from his task. He snatches the receiver with a brewed irritation.

JACK

Burns here.

(pause)

Yes... when was this?

His posture stiffens- he flicks the cigarette onto the desk.

JACK (CONT'D)
Found where?

Jack pens a note, jaw firm, hand writing sharp and precise, just like his personality. He hangs up.

JACK (CONT'D)
(muttering)
Another day... another body in the
water.

Jack's mind drifts to an unsettling memory... a coastal town where waves whispered a siren song and a young boy almost drowned.

He stands abruptly, pulling a hat from a coat rack of well-worn garments. Moving toward the blinds, he separates the slats with his fingers.

Outside, dark clouds brood and gather to threaten a storm, foreboding and heavy. Jack retrieves a lightweight rain jacket from the rack, slides it on. One final glance back, he kicks a file drawer shut. The noise echos in the quiet room.

JACK (CONT'D)
(to the room)
Let's see what trouble we can find
today.

With that he strides out, determination carved on his face.

EXT. LOCAL BEACH - DAY

Paniolos (Portuguese cowboys) inch forward toward the resting body. Healani stands before them, contemplating, as the ocean air whips through her hair.

HEALANI (V.O.)
I've seen the sea claim many
things, but never a life. Why here?
It should wash away sorrows, not
create them.

She raises a hand. They halt their advance. JACK approaches from behind, the spit of rain a warning of things to come.

JACK
Who is Healani?

HEALANI

That is me.

Jack kneels down, drops an evidence bag onto the beach, the crunch of sand resonates beneath it. He snaps on gloves.

JACK

Did anyone touch it?

HEALANI

No. I've kept them away.

JACK

Know him?

HEALANI

Never met him. It's so sad. Where did he come from?

Jack turns the bloated figure slowly, assessing the pockets. A WALLET and wet C-notes clutched by a silver MONEY CLIP. He flips open the wallet. A California I.D. spills forth-

INSERT: I.D. CARD

In official lettering, WILLIAM SANDS.

BACK TO SCENE

JACK

Mm-mm.

Rain peppers the ocean. Jack removes his rain jacket, hands it to Healani.

JACK (CONT'D)

Hold this- over him.

Healani hesitates but complies. Jack removes a scallop edged PHOTOGRAPH from a shirt pocket, shakes it to dry. He drops the items into the evidence bag. Jack zips it closed- stops short.

A brief stillness hangs in the air. Swollen lips draw his attention. He slides a finger under an upper lip, over teeth and gum. A tacky white PASTE reveals itself.

JACK (CONT'D)

(realizing)

Well, look at this.

Healani gasps softly, her eyes wide as she processes the implication.

HEALANI
What does it mean?

Jack meets her gaze- a shared question forged in tragedy.

JACK
We're about to find out.

INT. SHIP STATEROOM - NIGHT

DOCTOR PETERSON (60s) peers over bifocals scribbling notes on a clipboard. Paul sits on a bed, gripping his head in despair. A wall clock ticks, a metronome of passing time. Peterson leans in, concern creeping into his voice.

PETERSON
Paul, listen to me- is your grandfather nearby?

PAUL
What? Oh... he should be here. I live with him. California-Hollywood.

PETERSON
Hollywood? He's in the film industry?

PAUL
No.
(pause)
Shipping.

PETERSON
I see. And you... have you registered for the draft?

Distant FOOTSTEPS approach, resonate against the walls. Paul wavers, a spark of anxiety crosses his face.

PAUL
I'm 4-F... knee problems. Sixth man, Columbia University.

The door bursts open. Jack and two muscular policemen stride in with a sense of purpose.

JACK
Detective Burns, Honolulu Police Department. Paul Sands-

Paul unfolds his length, eyes wide.

PAUL
Where's my grandfather?

JACK
You need to come with us. It's
about William Sands.

PAUL
What do you mean? Where is he?

He blanches, a mixture of gloom and dread depletes him.

JACK
A formal inquiry has been opened
into the circumstances of his
death.

PAUL
My grandfather's... dead?

A moment of silence loiters in the air. Paul sways at the news, as if absorbing a punch.

JACK
I'm sorry to inform you- we need to
ask you some questions.

Jack holds his stare. The tension thickens. Paul shudders as he clenches his fists.

PAUL
No- this can't be happening.

The gravity of the situation settles between them. They shift to one side, like opposing gunfighters circling in a corral. A dark realization sweeps over Paul. He blinks, the storm of emotions unraveling within.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Just... give me a minute.

The clock ticks louder, a haunting echo in the background.

JACK
We must go- now.

INT. HONOLULU POLICE STATION - DAY

The clamor of ringing telephones and footsteps fills the air. Jack leans back against his desk, lost in thought. He pulls on the striker of a cigarette lighter- no flame. Jack squints at it. Flicks it open, an amused smirk on his lips as it sparks to life. With a snap, he closes it.

FBI AGENT DAUGHTRY (30s) strides past the open entryway, the weight of the world visible on his shoulders.

JACK

How's my favorite G-man? Up against the desk again?

Daughtry pauses, brow furrowed as he turns back.

DAUGHTRY

Hey, Jack. Same old chaos. Makes the war in Europe feel like a picnic. D-C's talking internment now. Not just the mainland- right here, too. Germans, Italians and get this-

He glances around, lowering his voice as if the walls have ears.

DAUGHTRY (CONT'D)

Japanese. We have orders to follow up on it.

Jack flares at the edict, his jaw tightens.

JACK

As if you have nothing better to do- got enough work as it is.

DAUGHTRY

That name you asked about-

Daughtry, duty focused, scans a clipboard, flips a paper over.

JACK

Otto Kuehn.

DAUGHTRY

Germanic?

JACK

My gut says German- but could be Dutch.

DAUGHTRY

He's on the list.

Jack nods tersely. Daughtry, sensing his stress, moves off and away. DESK SERGEANT HONAN (40s) leans in, folder in hand, eyes darting.

HONAN
Got a moment?

JACK
Any update on the Sands work-up?

HONAN
Here's the prelim- don't flip your wig.

Jack takes the folder, flips through it with an increasing frustration. He halts on a page, disbelief seeps into his voice.

JACK
No way- inconclusive? You've got to be kidding... substance requires further testing? What the-

HONAN
(voice low)
We can't hold him. He's being released.

Jack glances around, resolve oozing from his pores.

JACK
We're not letting this slip through. Not on my watch.

Honan nods once as Jack stands firm. Daughtry observes from the hallway opening, a glint of camaraderie in his eyes.

EXT. HONOLULU PORT - NIGHT

A soft breeze drifts over the dimly lit port as the sound of waves slap at the hull of the Lurline. Shadows scatter as ship spotlights sweep across the scene. Paul sits slumped on a weathered bench, lost in thought, the weight of a liquor bottle resting against him.

He lifts it to his lips, a long swig. The alcohol burns down his throat- a momentary escape from turbulent thoughts. As he sets the bottle down, it slides through his fingers with a hollow thud, shattering the eery quiet of the night.

Paul leans back against the bench, a heavy sigh escapes him as memories swirl of laughter, love... and loss. He reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out a photograph, flipping it over to view the backside.

INSERT:

In feminine cursive - ALL MY LOVE FOREVER, LANI

BACK TO SCENE

The words awaken no memory, make no sense. He gently returns the photograph. Shifting uncomfortably, he fishes out a folded pamphlet from a rear pants pocket, unfolding it with a shaky hand.

INSERT:

In decorative lettering - SOUVENIR PASSENGER LIST

F DECK

S.S. LURLINE

SAILING FROM LOS ANGELES HARBOR, NOVEMBER 1, 1941

FOR HONOLULU, T.H.

BACK TO SCENE

He skims over the manifest of names- one name catches his breath- WILLIAM SANDS.

PAUL (V.O.)

What other secrets did you hide?

Paul looks out toward the twinkle of lights that border the port entrance.

PAUL

(whispering)

I will find out the truth.

Facing a swell of emotion he leans back, closes eyes- his mind floats back to the confrontation.

FLASHBACK

EXT. HONOLULU PORT - LURLINE - DAY

Paul weaves through the bustling crowd. Isamu and Otto converse as they press forward, their faces unreadable. He bumps into Isamu- hard, looks back. Isamu scowls. Paul shifts his attention to OTTO, whose features show alarm as the face-off unfolds.

BACK TO PRESENT

EXT. HONOLULU PORT - NIGHT

Paul sits up straight, a spotlight illuminating his troubled appearance. His FINGER slides down the manifest before pausing on a name-

INSERT:

In formal type- BERNARD J. OTTO KUEHN

BACK TO SCENE

VOICES approach in the distance, snapping Paul from his reverie. A wave of panic grips him. He slips back into the shadow behind the bench, heart racing.

Paul folds the list, sliding it into his back pocket. He peers through the bench slats, breath caught in his throat as he watches.

AUSTRALIAN STEWARDS, CORBYN (20s) and HANLEY (20s) stroll toward the boarding ramp, their laughter cutting through the weighted air.

CORBYN

I'm going to chuck a willy if we
don't depart soon.

Hanley flicks a lit cigarette into the water, watching it sizzle against the brine.

HANLEY

Why the rush? You carry on like a
pork chop- must be love.

Corbyn grins, the unlatched gate swings wide as Hanley slides it back, bold and carefree. Both move through, leaving the gate ajar. They ascend the ramp, stepping onto the ship as it beckons them.

Paul watches them vanish, a longing and dread twisting in his gut. He ambles over to the gate, hesitates, squeezes through the opening. Paul weaves his way up the gangplank, each step heavy with uncertainty, drifting into the night- and the unknown.

EXT. SHIPYARD PARKING LOT - JACK - NIGHT - HIGH AERIAL

The stark, cold light from tall posts brighten an empty parking lot. Shadows shift in a secluded corner, hinting at a mystery.

POLICE CAR

Inside the POLICE CRUISER, Jack sips coffee from a thermos, eyes narrow as he spots movement through the windshield. He drains the cup, setting it aside. With an anxious hand he raises binoculars.

Through the lenses, he sees Paul, unsteady on his feet, zigzagging up the gangplank. His jaw tenses as Paul disappears into the Lurline.

JACK
(murmuring)
Don't do this.

Jack lowers the field glasses, a stern look on his face. He keys the ignition.

PARKING LOT

The police cruiser ROARS to life. Lights flash onto the empty expanse. Jack accelerates through the parking lot, a sense of duty propelling him into the encroaching darkness.

INT. SHIP STATEROOM - NIGHT

Paul stands before the locked stateroom door, a desperate expression tattooed on his face. He checks the handle-frustration bubbles to the surface. Paul steps back and KICKS it.

The door bursts open, splintered wood flying. A distant SHAPE on the hallway floor catches his eye, draws him in. Paul staggers over, bends down to inspect- a BROKEN VIAL and POUCH, white powder shimmering in the faint light. He leans in to sniff, recoiling in an instant.

PAUL
(whispers)
What the-

CAPTAIN EDWARDS (50s) and Jack appear near the doorway, their presence overshadowing his shocked surprise.

EDWARDS
What are you doing?

Paul rises, wobbly, in a whirl of panic and regret.

PAUL

I thought I could find something...
a secret... to explain it all.

EDWARDS

By breaking in? Real smart, genius.

Paul clenches his fists, edges of anger and despair surfacing. Jack steps forward, his voice hardens as he notices the contraband on the floor.

JACK

More like hiding- hiding evidence.

Jack pulls Paul's arms behind him, sensing the moment.

JACK (CONT'D)

Paul Sands, you're under arrest for
the murder of William Sands.

HANDCUFFS SNAP tight around his wrists. The sound echos through the distressed silence.

PAUL

I couldn't- I didn't. You've got to
believe me... I was looking for the
truth.

The atmosphere is suffocating. The faint sound of distant swells lapping against the ship- a chilling reminder of reality closing in.

JACK

Good- so am I.

Jack turns with authority and leads Paul away.

INT. HONOLULU JAIL - DAY

A PRISON GUARD (30s) walks a stark corridor. Skeleton keys jangle from a hand-held ring, echoing off the cold walls.

A smaller Scotsman, MR. G (50s) trails behind. His tweed hat slightly askew, a friendly warmth radiates from rosy cheeks perched on top of an infectious smile. On queue, he breaks into the whistle of a Scottish tune.

The guard halts at a thick wooden jail door, peering through the barred peephole.

GUARD
(gruff)
In there.

Paul paces the length of a small prison cell, anxiety in every step.

PAUL
Arrested for something I didn't do.
Will I ever get out?

The guard keys the lock, the door swings open. They step inside- blocking the light. A rich brogue fills the air.

MR. G
Paul?

Paul stiffens, heart racing. The guard stands as a barrier, obscuring his vision.

PAUL
Mr. Gillespie? Is that you?

With an unexpected spring, Mr. G pops out from behind the guard, adding a breath of fresh air to the dreary cell.

MR. G
Aye, it's been far too long- what's
it been... five, six years?

PAUL
Mr. G!

They embrace, a silent connection- filled with unspoken fears.

MR. G
I hear you've rolled into quite a
spot o'trouble.

Paul looks down, the weight of Mr. G's concern rushes over him.

PAUL
I didn't think I'd see a friendly
face again.

Mr. G offers a reassuring smile.

MR. G
I can see that. You need more than
just a jolly tune at the moment.

He tries to lighten the mood.

MR. G (CONT'D)
 It's just a bend in the road, my
 friend. You'll figure it out.

They exchange a look of camaraderie and unspoken hope. A pause hangs between them.

MR. G (CONT'D)
 How 'bout we start with getting ye
 out of here.

The surprise freezes Paul. Mr. G smiles, motions for him to follow, a wink in his eye. Relief washes over Paul, a flicker of light in sad eyes where only shadows once stood.

EXT. HONOLULU JAIL - DAY

The bright Hawaiian sun beats down on tall barb-wired JAIL fencing. The air is thick with heat and the distant sound of waves crashing against a shore.

Mr. G approaches a parked 1941 HUDSON, its sleek beauty and convertible top testament to his love for the open road.

Paul lags behind, dragging a tattered suitcase. He glances back at the jail, heart heavy, but relieved to be free. Mr. G reaches the car and turns back toward him, pleasant-faced, a spark of encouragement in his voice.

MR. G
 Poor fella. Alone, locked up... in
 the news, no less-
 (softer)
 I came as quick as I could.

Paul catches up, stares into the distance.

PAUL
 Can't stop thinking about him.
 (sighs)
 He's gone... forever-
 (choking up)
 I think I saw his body go over the
 side... I should get the hell out
 of here.

MR. G
 And be wanted for the rest of your
 life? Let it all blow over. Stay
 with me and Nan- sleep in the guest
 room.

PAUL

I never got to apologize. How did
this happen?

(then)

I should've told him I loved him.

Mr. G's face softens, an understanding nod.

MR. G

Come along, laddie. Let's load up
the car and be off with you.

WHEELS spin, pebbles spit, the Hudson speeds away, leaving
behind the shadows of regret- heading toward an uncertain
beginning.

EXT. WINDWARD OAHU - KANEOHE RANCH - DAY

JORGE LUIS (30s) rides a spirited quarter horse on a
sun-drenched grassy hillside. He embodies the Paniolo life,
rugged and defiant, as cattle graze nearby.

HEALANI trails him on horseback, watches him hawk-like,
sensing the uneasiness radiating from him. She loves this
land, this life, but it doesn't come without its burdens.

From the curve of the landscape, the HUDSON, top down,
barrels around a bend.

A whisper of wind flows through tall green, but the
peacefulness is shattered by the distant ROAR of military
vehicles. Jorge's black eyes harden as the SOUND of JEEPS
closes in.

JORGE

Damn you! This ain't your road.

The G.I.s IN JEEPS G.I. zoom past, laughter mingling with
jeers, including G.I. MORGAN (20s).

MORGAN

Hey, Joe! Look at the wannabe
cowboy.

Jorge pulls hard on the reins. The horse bucks beneath him,
sensing his frustration.

JORGE

It's Jorge! Jorge Goddamn Luis and
I'm no joke!

He swings off the horse, gripping the saddle as he approaches the road. A trailing jeep clips a fence post, sending chips flying. Jorge gestures an obscenity with a swift motion. Healani slows her horse, concern on her face.

HEALANI

Don't do this, Jorge. Just let them go.

Isamu approaches on horseback with a chilling confidence. He sneers while watching the departing caravan.

ISAMU

American devils. They'll eat dirt one day. Clowns, all of you.

In the heat of anger, Jorge spins around, fists raised.

ISAMU (CONT'D)

Healani, we must talk.

JORGE

You think you're so clever. C'mon, get down. I'm tired of your bull shit.

Before the moment sinks in, the HUDSON pulls up, drawing attention. Mr. G leans out from the driver's seat, his presence grounded amidst the discord.

MR. G

Olá. Como você- está? Is everything all right?

JORGE turns, caught off guard by familiarity.

JORGE

Mr. G-

His eyes dart to Isamu, then to Mr. G.

JORGE (CONT'D)

(resolute)

Isamu was just leavin'.

In the front passenger seat, Paul stands up as he recognizes Isamu.

PAUL

I've seen you before.

He catches the gaze of Healani. Isamu notices and sneers. As if orchestrated, he whips out a knife, a flick of the wrist spinning an expert toss. JORGE ducks just in time. The KNIFE wedges into a fence post, quivering- ominous.

PAUL
What the hell?!

Paul attempts to leap from the car. Healani's sharp vocal stops him in his tracks.

HEALANI
Enough! You're like children-

She turns her gaze to Paul, her voice tinged with desperation.

HEALANI (CONT'D)
And you aren't helping. Please...
just leave.

ISAMU
(grins darkly)
Save yourself, haole.

JORGE, fists still clenched, fights the urge to lash out as he glares at Isamu.

JORGE
(to Mr. G)
We're good- we're all good.

Mr. G nods knowingly, sensing the undercurrents.

MR. G
Paul- let's go.

Paul glances between Healani and Mr. G., uncertainty flickers across his face. He sinks back down into the car, resigned. With a final, lingering heaviness the Hudson roars away, leaving behind the echos of unrest.

KANEOHE RANCH

Healani looks at Jorge, her disappointment palpable. She backs up her horse, turning it toward Isamu.

HEALANI
The answer is still no, Isamu.
It'll always be no. Stop stalking
me.

His eyes narrow, a carnivore sizing up his prey.

ISAMU

Think carefully about your words,
ko'u aloha. One day, you might
regret them. Only a fool resists.

A hard kick to the horse's flank. Rider and mount disappear over the hill, leaving behind a sense of dread in their wake. Jorge, fists clenching at his side, watches Isamu go, the clash of history swirling around them like dust in the wind.

EXT./INT. PALI HIGHWAY - DAY - (LATER)

The late sun bathes the landscape in a warm glow, casting long shadows as the HUDSON crests the PALI. Mr. G angles the vehicle to one side and parks.

A column of ARMY TRUCKS thunder past, rumbling down the hill, a stark reminder of a world in turmoil. Paul gazes out, lost in thought, watching the trucks disappear around the bend. He bears the weight of loss, memories of his grandfather and his parents swirling within.

MR. G

You've had a run of it, haven't
you, lad? First your parents-
(then)
Now this.

Paul turns slightly, meeting his eyes, vulnerability in his gaze.

PAUL

(softly)
I keep thinking- maybe I could've
done something.

Mr. G nods, sensing the turmoil. He moves to exit the car, pauses to take in the splendor of the Nu'uauu Pali.

MR. G (CONT'D)

When I'm feeling blue, I stop right
here. Mark Twain said it's the best
view in the world. Come on, I'll
show you.

Paul hesitates, glances at the last of the trucks, back to a comforting Mr. G.

PAUL

(swallows)
I don't know Mr. G.-

MR. G
 (with warmth)
 Just trust me. Let it speak to you.

They ascend a grassy hill in silence, shadows stretching along side them, a shared burden of understanding. PAUL and MR. G reach a clearing, revealing an expansive vista of the coastline. The tranquility relaxes Paul. A breeze tousles his hair- there seems to be clarity in the view.

MR. G (CONT'D)
 Don't let the past darken your
 journey- hope waits just over the
 hill.

Paul looks back at Mr. G, nods once. Perhaps, just maybe, there is some purpose ahead.

EXT. PALI LOOKOUT - DAY

PAUL and MR. G move along a short, rugged stone wall. Below, a cavernous ravine yawns like an open wound, painted by a thick rainbow of flora. Paul inhales a deep breath, letting the crisp, on-shore air flood his lungs.

MR. G
 Won't make you forget your
 troubles, but isn't it
 breathtaking?

PAUL
 It's... beautiful.

MR. G
 Kamehameha the Great stood right
 here. Chased enemies off these very
 cliffs during the Battle of Pali.

Paul's expression grows thoughtful as history presses up against him. The wind increases, a supernatural incarnation swirling about him. He closes his eyes in the moment-

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

FLASHBACK

EXT. SHIPYARD - WILCOX RALLY - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "FORTY-NINE YEARS EARLIER"

A bustling harbor market buzzes with energy. Vibrant banners flutter on a makeshift stage, an excited CROWD of HAWAIIANS standing united before it.

Hands are raised high with signs- *REFORM*, *EQUAL RIGHTS*, *LIBERTY*, *VOTES ARE POWER*. Young WILLIAM strains to see over the pulsing throng.

SUPERIMPOSE: "WILCOX RALLY - MAY, 1892"

The devoted audience hangs on every word uttered by the CHARISMATIC ROBERT WILCOX (30s), dressed in an ITALIAN MILITARY UNIFORM, his voice commanding their attention.

ROBERT WILCOX

What kingdom? What elections? These aren't elections. Where is your power?

The multitude roars its approval, but William's gaze drifts. landing on IWALANI, who scribbles notes, brows contracted, as if she wishes to hide her eyes beneath them.

ROBERT WILCOX (CONT'D)

Where is your right to vote? Send those letters! Demand reform!

Cheers pulsate in approval, igniting the fires within William- this is bigger than a rally, this is a fight for their future.

As the crowd chants, "No more tyranny!", he captures Iwalani's eye, their connection instant, timeless amidst the clamor. His heart skips a beat.

A military WAGON thunders into view, interrupting the raucous atmosphere. Tension chokes the air as rifle-bearing HONOLULU RIFLES pour out, advancing toward the commoners. CLARENCE ASHFORD (40s), a hard-edged man on horseback, brandishes a RIFLE.

CLARENCE

Arrest that man!

The crowd stiffens, the moment seems to stand still. William grimaces, twists instinctively toward Iwalani, grasps her elbow. He feels her tremble, sees her resolve harden.

WILLIAM
 (urgent whisper)
 Stay close!

A loud CRACK of gunfire shatters the uneasiness. The alarmed mob reacts with screams, scattering like leaves in a storm.

CLARENCE
 (with megaphone)
 This is an illegal assembly.
 Disperse or face arrest.

The solidarity crumbles, but Iwalani stands firm, her eyes lock with William's, fear battling courage in her stare.

IWALANI
 We can't let them do this.

Two riflemen advance. One grabs her arm, but she struggles- undeterred- breaks free.

WILLIAM
 (shouting)
 Run- I'll hold them off!

For a moment their eyes meet in pure desperation. Her heart pounds as she sprints off and away. William turns to confront the riflemen, fists flying before he is struck down. With one final glance, he sees Iwalani disappear from view, hope following her like a lantern in a storm. The butt of a RIFLE descends, darkness devours him.

BACK TO PRESENT

EXT. PALI LOOKOUT - DAY

The lush Pali scenery sharpens into focus. Paul steps back, reeling from the cryptic reflections, turns toward Mr. G.

PAUL
 What the- what was that?

MR. G
 Aw... the Kama'aina- the locals.
 They say the mountains sing to
 those who must listen-

Paul raises an eyebrow, the corners of his mouth tighten.

PAUL
 To echos, or secrets in the past?

Mr. G smiles warmly, sensing the depth of Paul's confusion.

MR. G
 Maybe both... they feel the land
 has a spirit- see this around you?

He sweeps an arm across the landscape, his gaze holding a deep admiration.

MR. G (CONT'D)
 This is all Castle property.
 Kaneohe Ranch. The largest ranch on
 the island.

His finger points out Kailua Bay, its jeweled waters beckoning.

MR. G (CONT'D)
 And that's Kailua, which means "Two
 Waters." A perfect balance... like
 how we should navigate life.

Paul pulls out the faded photo and the money clip as his agitation surfaces. He thrusts them toward Mr. G.

PAUL
 Nothing makes sense, Mr. G. These
 were with him. The photo's ancient!
 Who are they?

Mr. G glances at the money clip, holds up the photograph. Two women pose in fine dress. The oldest wears a BUTTERFLY HAIRPIN-

INSERT:

Black and white photograph- SNAPSHOT OF IWALANI AND QUEEN LILI'UOKALANI

BACK TO SCENE

He lowers the photo, shaking his head, returning the items to Paul.

MR. G
 I wish I could help... I don't know
 these wahine.

The moment hangs in the air. Mr. G studies Paul for a heartbeat, offers a comforting invitation.

MR. G (CONT'D)
 I can smell me missus cooking from
 here... how about we grab a bite?
 It might clear the mind a bit.

With a slight smile he nods and motions for Paul to follow, leading him back toward the Hudson. The majestic Pali fades away in the background, holding its songs close once more.

EXT. LANIKAI BEACH COTTAGE - DAY

Paul returns from a swim, (a la Burt Lancaster) water glistening on his skin. He approaches a quaint 1930s beach house nestled between towering neighbors, its spacious yard trimmed with vibrant flowers swaying in the wind.

At the edge of the yard, Mr. G and a Japanese landscaper, KENJI FUJIMOTO (40s) wear broad-brimmed hats. Both men labor under the oppressive sun, sweat staining their clothes like badges of hard work.

MR. G
Hope you didn't miss breakfast,
laddie. Nan was starting to worry.

Paul's gaze drifts to Kenji, who tends to a plant.

MR. G (CONT'D)
Kenji-

Kenji shuffles over, measuring each step with precision.

MR. G (CONT'D)
Paul Sands... Kenji Fujimoto.

Kenji bows deeply, while Paul extends a hand. Kenji meets it with a gloved one, shaking the fingers gently.

MR. G (CONT'D)
Tell Paul your secret for keeping
the Hibiscus blooming.

KENJI
Coffee grounds. What the missus
throws out makes fine fertilizer.

Kenji beams with pride, bows again. Paul surveys the thriving yard.

PAUL
If only gramps could see this
place- damn detective.

Mr. G exchanges a knowing glance with Kenji before dismissing him with a wink.

MR. G
Thanks, my friend.

As Kenji resumes his work, Mr. G pulls Paul aside.

MR. G (CONT'D)
This ain't Hollywood, big fella.
Easy on the full court press. Many
moons ago I had a run-in with the
the H-P-D. Thought I was better
than the cops. I didn't win,
believe me.

PAUL
Doesn't change the fact they don't
listen... that powder smelled
sweet, then it turned nasty- a real
headache, you know?

Mr. G nods, takes off his gloves, slaps them together.

MR. G
First things first. Let's see what
Nan has for you.

Mr. G throws his hat and gloves on a nearby bench. Paul
grabs a shirt off a porch railing. The entrance invites-
footsteps crunch the gravel as they stride inside.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Otto pilots a small skiff on the open sea, the distant
silhouette of windward O'ahu shimmers under a midday sun.
The boat slows to a stop, idles.

He squints at his watch, each rhythmic tick scratching at
his anxiety. The waves undulate and rock, a tranquil
counter-point to his feelings.

Without warning, a rubber raft breaks clear from the glare
of open ocean. Isamu paddles up to one side, his face a
blank pallet.

OTTO
Guten Tag.

ISAMU
Konnichiwa- we speak English.

OTTO
It's taking forever. Every minute
feels like a warning. They should
(MORE)

OTTO
 be ready- what if we miss the
 window?

Isamu's eyes narrow, assessing Otto's tone.

ISAMU
 Keep your focus. It will happen.
 The codes have changed. Updates are
 required- now... not later.

He tosses a satchel into the skiff with a practiced ease.
 Otto intercepts it, frustration flaring.

OTTO
 Again? We just changed them! What
 is wrong with your operation? It's
 never ready.... what if they
 suspect us?

ISAMU
 You question my orders? You're
 testing my patience.

Otto raises a hand, attempting to calm the storm brewing
 between them.

OTTO
 Alles klar. Ich verstehe. I do my
 job, even if it risks-

ISAMU
 (cuts him off)
 No mistakes! Your life depends on
 it. Protect the mission-
 understood?

As the sharp command pierces like an arrow from a bow,
 Otto's loyalty wavers, but he silences his doubts.

OTTO
 (strained)
 Glory to the fatherlands.

Isamu leers at him, anger hardening as he senses the lack of
 resolve.

ISAMU
 (coldly)
 I remain undercover.

He pushes a paddle against the boat. The raft turns and
 heads off, leaving Otto behind, uncertainty etched deep in
 his eyes.

As Isamu shrinks into the horizon, the waves increase in volume, echoing the dread that prowls his uneasy heart.

INT. LANIKAI BEACH COTTAGE - DAY

NAN GILLESPIE (50s) petite. with styled silver hair, stands before a proud kitchen. Radiating warmth, she is gentle, reserved, the yin to Mr. G's unabashed yang.

The table is set with fine china and matching chairs. Everything is pristine, like her nature. Mr. G, in a cheerful spirit, grabs a chair and plops down.

Paul bends down to hug her, sensing her soft nostalgia, as a calming accent welcomes him.

NAN

You look so relaxed today. Is the room to your liking?

Paul winks, but a hint of tension lingers.

PAUL

Bed's a little short.

They settle into their seats. Nan's eyes scan Paul for something more.

NAN

You've been through so much lately, my dear. Don't hesitate to talk... we're here for you.

Paul puts up a brave face, but his mind drifts elsewhere. Mr. G leans in, sensing the gravity in the room.

MR. G

Now's a good time. Show her- show her what you showed me.

Paul slides over the PHOTO and MONEY CLIP. As Nan catches a glimpse of Iwalani, she raises her brows.

NAN

She's attractive.

Reading glasses hang from a chain around her neck. She uses them to study the clip, a gleam in her eyes.

NAN (CONT'D)

You should take this to Kailua Town. The jeweler might help you.

His thoughts resurface, a harsh realization bubbles forth.

PAUL

I can't shake the feeling that time is running out. I need to know what all this means.

Nan hands the items back to Paul.

MR. G

Let's do that later. I got me an idea- just what the doctor ordered. Who needs a mystery when we can have a little adventure? You and I, lad, are going to the horse races!

Paul leans back, surprised and yet intrigued.

PAUL

Horse races?

Nan rolls her eyes playfully, while the smile on her lips appreciates Mr. G's intent.

NAN

Just don't let him bet the house!

The moment lightens, they all share a laugh.

EXT. KAILUA RACE TRACK - OTTO - DAY

The sun hangs high above a swaying coconut grove, casting dancing shadows over an oval horse racing track- ocean air sharing the sounds of hoofbeats and eager chatter.

A car crunches into a dirt lot kicking up dust, where a medley of vehicles are parked in haphazard rows. It veers between two trucks and parks. The engine purrs to silence as the driver's door swings open.

Otto steps out, camera slung over a shoulder, scanning the frenetic scene with a mix of curiosity and caution. Snippets of conversation float in on a breath of wind. He lingers at a truck headlight, leaning out to inspect the lively atmosphere.

KAILUA RACE TRACK ENTRY - CONTINUOUS

A line of eager patrons snakes its way forward toward a track entry gate, their vibrant outfits contrasting sharply with the natural backdrop.

Mr. G hustles toward the entrance, glancing back at PAUL, who trails a few paces behind.

MR. G

You go ahead, I'll catch up

He nods to a small man in a giant hat, whose hands flutter about, paper currency between fingers, a magician conjuring his next sorcery.

Mr. G discreetly exchanges a small wad of bills for a sliver of paper. Returning to Paul, his eyes glimmer with mischief.

PAUL

A winner, or a dreamer?

MR. G

Just you wait- Jorge Luis is on Paniolo Pleasure- best horseman around these parts!

The roar of the crowd swells as they inch closer to the gate, the excitement audible.

Paul glances over Mr. G's shoulder, scanning for familiar faces. He spots Otto hidden behind a grandstand support, focusing a lens, snapping photos of the crowd.

PAUL

(recognizes Otto)

He was on F Deck-

They move closer to the entrance, Mr. G tugs on his arm.

MR. G (CONT'D)

C'mon, hurry- races are about to start. I can smell me a winner!

As they pass through the gate, losing themselves in the pulsating sea of spectators, the moment crystallizes, leaving Paul caught with a quiet question in his mind.

PAUL

(to himself)

What are you really after, Mr. Kuehn?

EXT. KAILUA RACE TRACK INFIELD - DAY

Paul and Mr. G lean against an infield barrier. Riders parade their horses in a paddock. The air is electric, tinged by the internal fires of worry and speculation.

Jorge leads Paniolo Pleasure by the reins, waving at a packed grandstand. An announcement booms over the crowd.

TRACK ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Last call for the Kailua Stakes.
Last call!

Jack approaches unnoticed. An authoritative hand grips Mr. G's shoulder.

JACK

Never one to miss out on a little action, I see.

Startled, Mr. G turns. Jack's stern face softens into a smile.

MR. G

Well if it ain't Jack Burns! You gave me a right start, ol' friend.

JACK

Betting on the sweepstakes?

MR. G

Not so sure-
(to Paul)
What's your take?

Paul's glare is steely, filled with unresolved contempt.

PAUL

You think a horse race matters right now?

MR. G

Just having a bit of fun, Paul.

Paul stiffens, frustration boiling just beneath the skin.

M.R. G (CONT'D)

(Stepping in)

Sorry, Jack. But it's important. Paul has questions about his grandfather.

JACK
The autopsy will shed light.

MR. G
How long might that take?

JACK
Could be a few more days-

PAUL
Stop the charade- just arrest me.
We both know why you're here.

JACK
You don't call the shots, Sands.
These aren't your islands.

Paul surges forward but Mr. G intercepts, glaring up at him.

MR. G
Apologies, Jack- just trying to get
to the bottom of things. Did you
know his grandfather had a history
here on O'ahu?

JACK
Can't say that I did.

MR. G
Could you for an ol' Scotsman,
scour some records?

Jack glances at Paul, who shifts warily.

JACK
For you, my friend? I'll see what I
can find.

His eyes wander to Otto, who weaves through parked cars,
taking photos.

JACK (CONT'D)
Who's that man with the camera?

MR. G
That would be Otto Kuehn. Bit of a
strange bird- a real odd fellow, if
you ask me.

Jack nods, respect for Mr. G in his gaze.

JACK

Catch you next time, Mr. G.

He strides away but pauses, turning back toward them.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh- good luck with Jorge.

Jack melts into the infield crowd, leaving tension hovering in the air.

KAILUA RACE TRACK

Horses and riders gear up at the Start Line. Jorge jockeys Paniolo Pleasure into position, eyes focused, radiating determination. A hush drifts over the crowd. A shoed HOOOF paws at the ground, anticipation crackling like static.

A START GUN blast echos. They're off. Paniolo Pleasure is jammed against the rail. The lead horses surge forward, distancing themselves. Mr. G slumps, excitement and worry now at odds.

RACE TRACK - HORSES

The pack makes a wide turn, entering the backstretch. Jorge fights his way through, Paniolo Pleasure responding instinctively to his touch.

Thundering hooves drum a wild symphony, the chaos flinging dirt and mud. FLASH BULBS pop like firecrackers. The throng roars, its tidal wave of emotion sledge-hammering Paul.

TRACK ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

It's a blanket finish!

The crowd holds its collective breath as their hearts leap forward.

TRACK ANNOUNCER (CONT'D) (V.O.)

Paniolo Pleasure, winner by a nose!

Cheers erupt, an explosion of jubilation sweeps the infield. Mr. G jumps up and down, exuberant. Hats fly in the air.

From the euphoric crowd, Healani glides toward the race track, her presence magnetic. Paul tracks her every move, eyes narrowing below a stitched brow.

Jorge holds the reins to Paniolo Pleasure, waving amidst the merrymakers. Healani approaches him, draping a lei over his head.

They hug, the warmth of connection a stark contrast to Paul's intensity. He steps back as revelers obscure his view.

EXT. ROAD TO KAILUA TOWN - DAY - (MOVING)

The Hudson glides along a winding road that hugs the coastline. Sun-drenched, contemplating, Paul grips the wheel with one hand.

The wind tussles Mr. G's hair as he leans out, savoring the salty breeze.

MR. G
(shouting)
Can you smell that? It's paradise!

Sunlight gleams off a weathered stone pillar-

LANIKAI

BACK TO SCENE

Ironwood trees whip past, casting shadows as the road curves inward. The sky shifts to a splash of orange and gold, its colors hinting at the late afternoon. A BURMA-SHAVE billboard, tall and jovial, whizzes by, giving way to a large, colorful wooden sign-

WELCOME TO KAILUA TOWN

BACK TO SCENE

Kailua Town unfurls before them, a blend of island charm and bustling energy. The Hudson rolls to a stop.

The mixture of military vehicles adjacent to a vibrant KAILUA TAVERN are a stark reminder of their heavy influence. A charming BEER sign hangs precarious, neon light catching the eye.

PAUL
(nervous)
You think the military is here for a reason?

MR. G
(laughs)
Probably just thirsty. Best you not think too hard about it.

A theater marquee showcases HOPALONG CASSIDY, hinting at the simple pleasures of the townsfolk. Across the way, a HARADA STORE window reflects a rainbow of parked cars.

To one side, a small, charming building trimmed in lush foliage flashes a flickering JEWELER signboard. Mr. G's eyes dart to the jeweler shop, urgency in his tone.

MR. G

If you're gonna find answers,
better hurry.

Paul parks, tosses the keys to Mr. G, who catches them. Mr. G gets out and strides off toward the store.

MR. G (CONT'D)

I'm heading to Harada. Meet you at
the bar.

PAUL

You sure about this? I mean-

MR. G

Relax, just a quick stop- loosen
up!

A sudden loud RUMBLE, a roll of thunder in the distance. Both men turn, lingering for a moment- unaware it's a warning of things to come.

INT. JEWELER - DAY

A door strap jingles as Paul bursts into the shop, urgency plastered on his face. Warmly-lit, the light reflects off glass showcases filled with glittering treasures.

Jeweler tools are strewn about, creating a chaotic, yet enticing display. JEWELER WATANABE (60s) distinguished by a frame of grey hair, looks up from behind a glass counter.

PAUL

(slightly out of breath)
Excuse me, still open?

WATANABE

About to close, young man. What can
I do for you?

Paul steps closer, sliding the money clip across the counter, his eyes ablaze with inquiry.

PAUL

I need your help to read the inscription.

Watanabe inspects it, his expertise evident as he deftly dips into a polishing solution, revealing years of tarnish in an instant. He reaches for an eyepiece.

WATANABE

Sterling silver- the highest quality. Nineteenth century. Only the royal palace could afford such craftsmanship.

He focuses, eyes sharp behind the eyepiece, fingers tracing its contours.

WATANABE (CONT'D)

I-W-A-L-A-N-I. Iwalani...

PAUL

Iwalani? Lani... royal palace? What about this?

Paul slides the faded photo over, the edges now curled. Watanabe studies it. He looks up at Paul.

WATANABE

You not know? Diamond butterfly... worn by a great woman- by the queen, herself. To be featured in the picture? Special friend, indeed.

His words seem to suspend in the air. Paul's eyes fall for a moment, the weight of the revelation setting in.

PAUL

(whispers)

I was hoping for answers.

Watanabe observes Paul closely, his gaze softening. He places a reassuring hand on the counter.

WATANABE

Sometimes the past finds a way to reveal itself. Every piece is part of the story. This one waits for you.

The setting lingers on Paul, a mix of introspection and resolve as he contemplates the depth of his quest.

INT. KAILUA TAVERN - NIGHT

The bustling roadhouse bursts with energy as military personnel and locals mingle. An enormous juke box bellows big band tunes, struggling to be heard above the cacophony.

Paul leans against the bar, waving for attention. KIMO (30s) a massive bartender, pretends not to see him, lost in serving others. Mr. G scans the raucous mob and spots JORGE across the room, laughing with a rowdy group of Paniolos.

JORGE
(booming)
Mr. G! Over here!

Mr. G elbows Paul. They push through the sea of partiers, laughter and shouts ringing about them. JORGE springs from his seat, pulling Mr. G into a bear hug.

MR. G
You were magnificent today!

JORGE
Not bad for a Portugee, huh?

Mr. G gestures toward Paul, still catching his breath.

MR. G
This is my buddy, Paul Sands.
Hollywood's finest!

Jorge hollers a warm greeting, slapping the table for attention.

JORGE
Hollywood! Get over here, you movie
star!

Heads turn, eyes glinting with curiosity.

JORGE (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen, drinks on me!
Sir Hollywood!

Jorge points toward Kimo, raising his voice above the hubbub.

JORGE (CONT'D)
Mais um para mime meus convidados,
por favor!

Kimo lifts a nod, acknowledging Jorge's order.

KIMO
Comin' right up, Jorge.

MR. G
No thanks, amigo.

Mr. G leans closer to Paul, a conspiratorial wink.

MR. G (CONT'D)
Missus wants me sober tonight.

PAUL
You sure? This place looks like a
blast.

MR. G
You'll be fine here, right?

PAUL
Don't worry- get back to Lanikai.

Mr. G waves a farewell, merging back into the crowd.

TAVERN

The tavern atmosphere thickens with spirits. Paul and Jorge dive into camaraderie, toasting their glasses. A BUZZING ARMY PRIVATE (20s) leaps onto a table, belting out an off-key tune to cheers.

MUGS crash, BEER spills. A beefy, DRUNK SAILOR CHASE (20s), chip on his shoulder, stumbles into them and shoves JORGE.

CHASE
(slurring)
Get the hell out of my way, you
stinkin' Paniolo!

Jorge, ignited, lunges to throw a punch- he miscalculates- his fist lands square on an unsuspecting ARMY SERGEANT (30s).

ARMY SERGEANT
(shocked)
Damn! What the hell?

A BEER BOTTLE SHATTERS against the head of Jorge. Paul reacts and throws a haymaker at CHASE.

PAUL
You picked the wrong fight, sailor!

A melee erupts. Sailors, G.I.s and Paniolos throw punches- tables flip, chairs crash. CHASE, fueled by aggression, dives toward PAUL.

PAUL ducks under a wild swing, his movement fluid as he counters with a brutal uppercut, sending CHASE reeling.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Don't start what you can't finish!

Jorge and Paul find a moment beside the door, catching their breath amidst the free-for-all.

JORGE

Ain't this just the bee's knees?

PAUL

Feels like I'm in a movie all right.

They share a laugh, the tension easing for a moment. A sudden noise jolts them back- a G.I.s punch sends Jorge flying across the doorway.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Jorge!

Paul rushes forward, helping him to his feet. They stagger toward the exit.

JORGE

It ain't over yet!

EXT: PORCH

Jorge and Paul clamber onto porch steps, the cool night air hitting them. JORGE clutches the back of his head, slurs words.

JORGE

(Grinning)

Welcome to Hawaii, Hollywood.

They stumble into the street, bruised yet standing. That smirk returns-

PAUL

More like, "Welcome to fight night."

JORGE
Damn dogfaces.

A rusty 1930s PICK-UP TRUCK skids to a halt. HEALANI storms out, hands on hips, fierce and protective.

HEALANI
Are you out of your mind, Jorge?

JORGE (CONT'D)
Little sis to the rescue- huh?

He tries to climb into the truck but she blocks his way.

HEALANI
Get in. Now!

She slams the door after him, eyes darting toward PAUL.

PAUL
Little sis?

Coolly, she glares back, ready to defend her brother.

HEALANI
Family comes first.
(to Jorge)
Stay close, he's trouble.

She swings up into the cab, guns the engine and speeds off, TAILLIGHTS disappearing into the evening gray.

EXT. LANIKAI BAY - DAY

From the shoreline, PAUL surveys the sparkling bay. The SOUND of AIRCRAFT fills the air as NAVY P-40 fighter bombers pass by in perfect formation.

With a deep breath, Paul dives into the surf. His arms slice through the water with Olympic precision, propelling him forward. Paul pauses to tread water, the cool of the ocean refreshing against sun-kissed skin.

A swimmer approaches in the distance. Healani glides through the water with effortless strokes. Paul floats closer. Healani pulls up short- wary, eyeing him.

PAUL
Hey there- out for a swim?

HEALANI

Oh, it's you.

She hesitates then turns, swimming further out, ignoring him. Paul pursues. Healani slows to a stop, facing him, curiosity mingled with caution.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

What's your deal? Following me?

PAUL

I wanted to apologize. I think we got off on the wrong foot. I'm Paul- Paul Sands.

Just beyond, sea turtles break the surface, gliding gracefully.

HEALANI

Honu.

Paul glances back, fascinated by their gentle grace.

PAUL

They're incredible.

He moves in closer, drawn to the creatures.

HEALANI

Don't scare them.

A large shadow looms beneath the surface. The turtles scatter. Healani senses something amiss.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

Swim toward the shore- don't splash.

PAUL

I deserve that.

Intrigued, he matches her pace- backward treading, eyes darting.

HEALANI

It's a shark- a big one!

Fear races across his face, adrenaline flowing as reality sets in. He glances back where, suddenly, a large TIGER SHARK breaches the surface- primal, ruthless- its fin slicing through the water like a sharp blade. The pace quickens as the shark zeros in.

PAUL
(fiercely determined)

Go!

Paul thrusts Healani out ahead of them, instinct taking over. He kicks hard against the water. The shark hesitates, then lunges, mouth agape. Paul delivers a powerful kick forcing the shark to zigzag away into the murky depths.

He reaches the sandy bottom and helps Healani reclaim her footing. They bend over white sand, gasping for breath.

HEALANI
We need to warn everyone. If it's a Tiger, it's trouble.

She straightens, urgency in her eyes.

HEALANI (CONT'D)
Head up the beach. Tell the locals to keep the kids out of the water. I'll alert the fishermen.

PAUL
Okay- got it.

Paul scrambles up the shoreline, brushing sand off a bruised foot, stealing glances back at Healani.

HEALANI
The ocean can be unpredictable, like life.

Paul pauses to feel the weight of her words.

HEALANI (CONT'D)
What you did back there- it was very brave. I appreciate it. I'm Healani, by the way.

Their eyes meet, a silent understanding passing between them- the tension of the incident binding them.

PAUL
Nice to meet you, Healani.

EXT. BAY HOMES - DAY

Small hillside homes dot a deserted, sandy street. Paul stands near one of them, scanning the bay's tranquil waters, a furrow in his brow.

PAUL
 (calling out)
 There's a shark in the bay.

A HAWAIIAN FAMILY spills out of a small, adjacent home. Laughter fills the air as CHILDREN race about, encircling Paul like a small swarm. Their cupped hands reach up, eagerly anticipating candy.

Paul directs his attention to the adults. Among them a tall hapa man, KEONI KAMAKAWIWO'OLE (50s) who watches intently.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Keep the children out of the water.

A soft poke in the ribs pulls his focus. He looks down to IWALANI KAMAKAWIWO'OLE (70s) whose deep, probing eyes study him. Her once youthful enthusiasm transformed into the wisdom of a matriarch.

IWALANI
 You have no fear, young one. I see the strength of a warrior. Much koa, indeed.

PAUL
 I'm just trying to warn everyone.

She places a hand over his heart.

IWALANI
 (smiling gently)
 A warning is only as strong as the heart behind it.

She leans closer, lowering her voice as if sharing a secret.

IWALANI (CONT'D)
 Long ago, there was a fisherman who feared the ocean. One day, he discovered his strength was not just in his hands but in his spirit. That day, he caught the biggest fish he had ever seen.

Paul's curiosity piques as he processes her words.

PAUL
 (softly)
 Are you... Lani?

Iwalani's smile falters- her gaze shifts and she withdraws- retreating back to the small home, children in tow.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Iwalani.

She pauses and glances back, a flicker of recognition passing through her eyes, before vanishing around a corner. Paul stands there for a moment, absorbing her message.

PAUL (V.O.)

(reflective)

Strength from in here.

He pivots back onto the sandy road, a sense of purpose inscribed on his face.

BAY HOME - OTTO

Continuing down the sand packed road, Paul glances at distant aircraft landing on Mokapu. An upper level door on a seaside cottage opens and OTTO steps out, binoculars in hand. Paul hurries over to the side of a house, ducking behind a bush to spy.

OTTO surveys the ocean with a practiced eye, hangs the field glasses on a peg, then creeps down the steps. He approaches a clothesline, uneven sheets billow like sails in the wind. OTTO removes and rearranges them with meticulous precision.

From dense growth, ISAMU emerges. OTTO nods once, an acknowledgment flickering between them. He retreats up the stairs, picking up the binoculars. Paul crouches low, heart racing. Otto opens the door, slips back inside.

ROAD

Isamu strides down the street, glancing back at Paul who rises to watch him disappear around a corner. Curious, Paul hurries after him, stopping short of a hedge to peek.

Isamu confers with a gang of LOCALS, their laughter mingling with the sounds of the ocean.

Paul leans in closer, adrenaline surging- a knife's cold tip presses against his chest.

ISAMU

(voice low)

What do haole say? Curiosity kills
the cat.

PAUL
(raising hands, backs up)
Don't threaten me.

Isamu brandishes the knife, his eyes fiery.

ISAMU
Moron- Healani is mine. Leave
Hawaii... now.

Paul's heartbeat drums in his ears as he focuses on the gang- silent sentinels observing.

PAUL
(defiant)
The hell she is- who are they?

He nods toward them, steeling his resolve. Isamu lunges forward, swiping his arm wide. Paul twists, barely avoiding the blade as it tears a gash in his shirt.

ISAMU
(snarling)
Haole deaf? Leave- or die.

Paul scrambles back, rage flaming as he checks his shirt.

PAUL
You were there- on F Deck- with the
German. What happened to my
grandfather?

Fever bright, Isamu growls at Paul. He sheaths the knife, the danger receding, yet his gaze lingers.

ISAMU
You are nothing.

The gang joins him, shadows rising behind them as they fade into the distance, leaving unresolved questions lingering in the island air.

EXT. KAILUA BAY - DAY

Paul strides down a sloping path toward a group of fishermen who stand rigid, casting wary glances at the water. Their faces, weathered and focused, show a mix of concern and resolve.

The men nod in unison to HEALANI, then scramble for gear, boarding moored boats with an urgent speed.

Above them a truck rumbles to a stop. JORGE bursts out, slamming the door behind him. He stomps downhill, purpose etched in a furrowed brow.

Hearing the disorder, Healani turns, her posture worried. She heads uphill catching sight of Paul.

PAUL

Jorge- didn't expect you out here.

Jorge waves Paul off, a dismissive gesture that sharpens the uneasiness.

JORGE

This has nothin' to do with you, Hollywood. Keep your nose out of it.

PAUL

Out of what, exactly?

Before Jorge responds, Healani steps in, her expression firm as she turns toward Jorge.

HEALANI

Enough! You can go.

JORGE

Go? There's a shark in the bay!

Healani glances at Paul, her eyes drawn to the cut in his shirt. She reaches for it but halts, a mixture of gratitude and worry dance across her features.

HEALANI

I can handle myself... let the fishermen do their jobs.

JORGE

You think I can just sit back? You were out there alone!

Her eyes flush with defiance: she knows this isn't just about the shark, it's about control.

HEALANI

You can't watch over me like I'm your child.

JORGE

Healani-

HEALANI

We reported the shark. Paul helped me. Can we please discuss this later?

As she pleads, Jorge's shoulders slumps, defeated but conflicted. He turns, striding uphill, his voice tinged with frustration.

JORGE

Helpful, huh? Then be at our ranch house at nine A.M.-

(then)

Hope a movie star can ride a horse.

He climbs back into the truck, slamming the door with finality. The vehicle lurches away, kicking up dust. Paul swivels toward Healani, eyes narrowed by concern.

PAUL

He's just looking out for you.

HEALANI

(looking toward the ocean)

And I'm grateful, but I need to do this on my own.

Healani takes a deep breath, the breeze tousling her hair, as she stares out over the now-still water and the scattered boats of the fisherman.

The tension lingers as they hear distant alarms- a warning siren blaring from the distant beach. She nods, determination flaring back to life.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

Let's go.

They sprint toward the beach, a shared urgency propelling them forward. The looming threat raises the stakes not just of the moment, but in their relationship, as well.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

The warm sun spreads over a large lot, rays filtering through the rustling leaves of Ironwood trees. The distant sound of a horse neighing rides a gentle breeze. Paul walks a private entry road taking in the beauty of the homestead.

Uncertainty churns in his stomach from the recent events and initial bond with Healani- it seems a world away now. A Navy jeep loiters near the larger of two homes. Jorge appears in the doorway of the smaller house, arms crossed, a smirk poised on his lips.

JORGE

Wonders never cease. Our hero is even on time. Too bad I don't have a white one-

He tosses Paul a well-worn cowboy hat.

JORGE (CONT'D)

It'll block the sun.

Paul catches it, a smile breaking through his doubt. He plops the hat on his head, a sense of calm washing over him.

PAUL

Better than swimming with sharks, right?

JORGE

(playful)

Don't count your money before the horses run.

Jorge angles off toward the barnyard. Healani strides in, guiding two horses past him. A cowgirl hat hangs from her neck like a badge of honor. Her confident presence stirs something new inside Paul.

HEALANI

Here you go.

She hands a rein to Paul, her fingers brushing against his- the moment lingers.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

They don't bite- unless, you provoke them.

With an effortless grace, she climbs onto her filly, donning her hat with a flick of independent spirit. Jorge rides up, another horse in tow. Paul loops long legs up and over, settling into the saddle with conviction. Jorge hops off, ties the trail horse to Paul's steed.

JORGE

We'll take the beach road across the Kawai Nui- watch out for the dips, they sneak up on you. I'll

(MORE)

JORGE
 take my colt to Kailua. You two
 drop these horses off- hitch a ride
 back.

Jorge swings back up onto his saddle, casting a knowing side-glance at Paul.

HEALANI
 (teasing)
 You ready to keep up, hero?

PAUL
 Just try to stay in front of me.

The small parade breaks into a trot, canters off and away, leaving the whispers of a new companionship behind.

EXT. SEASIDE ROAD - DAY

The caravan trots along a rugged dirt path. Sunlight glimmers on the ocean, mingling with salted air and blooming plumeria. JORGE maneuver's his horse closer to PAUL'S.

JORGE
 Kailua and Lanikai are changin'.
 They're talking about a hotel on
 the beach... I hate it.

Jorge gestures toward MOKAPU, where navy planes slice through the sky, their engines rumbling.

JORGE (CONT'D)
 And the military- taking our best
 grazing land. What a mess.

The trail veers toward a bridge. They traverse, slowing to a stop. Jorge squints through binoculars, then snaps them down in alarm.

JORGE
 Caramba! You two keep goin'- I'll
 catch up!

He kicks his horse into a sprint, sending up a cloud of bronzed dust. The horses stomp impatiently, sensing the energy.

JORGE (CONT'D)
 Haw!

Jorge disappears down the trail leaving a whirlwind in his wake. Healani and Paul's horses twitch with excitement, shifting into a swift trot.

TRAIL

Healani and Paul weave through thick foliage. Vibrant green rustles above them. A fluted spine of the Ko'olau range ascends splendidly in the backdrop. The trail bends downward, opening up to reveal a MILITARY BASE.

HEALANI
Kaneohe Naval Station.

An entrance bustles with naval personnel practicing ground drills. PBY CATALINA planes taxi, engines humming, filling the air with an energetic buzz.

HEALANI (CONT'D)
They're busy. Jorge thinks it's a big operation. Our navy tenants are rarely home.

PAUL
I thought he hated the military?

HEALANI
Business is business. But the grazing rights? Personal. The Castles have a thousand head. He'd fight tooth and nail for them.

His eyes drift toward the horizon, contemplating.

PAUL
Change is inevitable- but what's different since Gramps was here?

HEALANI
I'm sorry about your loss. We talked about it last night.

A shadow crosses Paul's eyes.

PAUL
It was sudden. I'm still in shock.

HEALANI
Will you have a service?

PAUL
 Tomorrow. I can't believe it.

HEALANI
 (pause)
 Did you know I was the one-
 His anger flares and simmers.

PAUL
 (interrupting)
 They're rushing me to bury him. I
 haven't even seen the autopsy
 report- what's the cause of death?!

Her gaze sharpens: does he know?

PAUL (CONT'D)
 The whole thing's a fubar.

PATH

Trees arch overhead, leading to a clearing nestled beside a sparkling stream. Healani observes Paul in earnest.

HEALANI
 My forefathers have called this
 home for centuries. My dad's side
 is Portuguese from the Azores.

Paul blinks, pulled from his thoughts.

PAUL
 So you're both Portuguese-Hawaiian?

HEALANI
 Jorge is my half-brother... same
 father.

PAUL
 What about you?

HEALANI
 My mother was pure Hawaiian. Makes
 me a hapa girl.

PAUL
 That's beautiful.

She slows her horse, a hint of curiosity in her eyes.

HEALANI

Tell me about your grandfather.

Paul fumbles in a pocket, retrieving the worn photo.

PAUL

This was with him when he died.

She takes the photo, her eyes darting over the image, then recoils slightly.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You okay?

HEALANI

I'm fine- just... reminded me of something.

She inspects the picture, turning it over.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

Beautiful girl. If her name is Lani, it means heavenly.

PAUL

I think it's short for Iwalani.

HEALANI

Heavenly seabird.

She hands it back, her expression considering.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

Her dress looks royal. A gift, perhaps?

PAUL

Did my grandfather know the queen?

HEALANI

There are records-
(then)

Maybe it's just about a girl.

PAUL

A lot of things are just about a girl.

She flips her hat back, kicks her horse into a canter.

HEALANI

C'mon.

Paul hesitates for a moment, caught between curiosity and desire before spurring his horse forward.

BYPATH - (LATER)

The air hangs thick with humidity. Healani halts her horse, tying her hair back. She motions at the trailing horse.

HEALANI

Paul, could you hand me a towel
from the saddle bag?

He reigns in his horse, dismounts and fetches the towel, handing it to her. He removes his hat with an awkward smile.

PAUL

I was thinking- what if we... hung
out? Without Jorge, that is.

Healani wipes her neck, arching an eyebrow at him.

HEALANI

You're tall. Play basketball?

Paul leans in, feeling hopeful- a playful toss of the towel- Healani hits him square in the face.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

Git.

With a bold kick, she sends her horse into a gallop. Stunned, Paul holds the towel in hand. Returning hat to head, he climbs back on, grabs the rein and kicks a flank. The trail horse resists. His steed rises high on hind legs.

PAUL

Whoa! Wait- was that a yes?

She fades into the colors of the horizon. Cheeks flushed, Paul scrambles to catch up.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A small, rural cemetery. Frugal headstones lean at odd angles, worn by time, each a eulogy to a loss. PAUL, hand trembling, leans forward to place a delicate rose upon a wooden casket.

Eyes cast down as grief overwhelms him. Flashbacks flood back- moments of fishing trips, warm laughter, shared love- memories that now ache in his chest.

He steps back and for a moment is unsteady. Mr. G, standing close, approaches to place an arm around PAUL, a silent pillar of support amid the heavy heartbreak. A swirl of air whispers its bittersweet melody, surrounding them in a cocoon of sorrow.

CEMETERY - JACK - CONTINUOUS

At a distance, JACK leans against a police car, arms folded. He observes PAUL and MR. G, his expression a mix of sympathy and professional detachment.

He checks a wrist watch, then takes a drag from a cigarette, watching the smoke twist in the breeze, vanishing like fleeting moments in life.

A flash of reflection stretches, letting sorrow linger in the air like the scent of nearby roses. Finally, MR. G breaks the silence, nodding toward JACK.

MR. G

Paul- we should talk to Jack.

They stride toward JACK, who straightens, snuffing out the cigarette, as if shedding a layer of discomfort.

JACK

Mr. G.... Mr. Sands. My apologies for intruding.

MR. G

What have you got for us, Jack?

JACK pulls a manila envelope from his jacket, his tone now more serious.

JACK

I wish the news was better. The autopsy didn't confirm a cause of death- its still undetermined.

He hands the envelope to PAUL- eyes red from mourning.

PAUL

What about the other thing?

JACK lifts a hand, urgency in his voice.

JACK

The investigation remains open. A blood sample is with the university- analysis pending.

PAUL

Am I still a suspect?

MR. G places a firm hand on PAUL'S shoulder, grounding him.

MR. G

Breathe, Paul. Remember our talk.

JACK

Concerning your inquiry, Mr. G- no record of a William Sands exists. But a William Sanderson was noted back in '93.

MR. G

Much obliged, Jack. I knew it to be a strange request, but we appreciate your help in the matter.

Jack nods, then moves to the driver's side door. Before he gets in, PAUL hesitates.

PAUL

That man at the race track- the one you asked about- he was at a beach house, moving sheets on a clothesline, using field glasses. It felt... off.

Jack's brow furrows, but he simply nods once, a hint of understanding crossing his face. He slides into the car, closing the door with a soft thud. The car revs up, pulling away, leaving PAUL and MR.G to the quiet echos of the cemetery- a stark contrast to the weight of the unresolved.

INT. OTTO KUEHN HOME - DAY

Filtered light streams into a living room, casting long shadows that dance across the walls adorned with family photos. Isamu sits in a chair, methodically sharpening a knife on a whetstone. The rhythmic scrape resonates terror. Otto paces, his eyes flitting about the room.

ISAMU

We need more detail on the harbor movements.

Otto stops in mid-stride, his breath quickens as he faces Isamu.

OTTO

I was just there! I'm not just
some... "schleichen"- some ghost
ready to be caught.

ISAMU

Stop your whining. Victory is
close. You will have glory-

OTTO

Glory? At what cost?

ISAMU

(firmly)

And I will rule Hawaii.

Otto takes a shaky breath, desperation creeping into his
diction.

OTTO

No. "Nicht mehr." I can't do this.
Tell your Kapitan- I quit. I'm
done! "Fertig!"

Otto turns away, anxiety evident in his trembling hands.
Isamu catapults forward, grabbing him from behind. The cold
edge of the KNIFE presses against Otto's neck. A bead of
sweat forms and a trickle of blood rolls down. Isamu growls
a whisper.

ISAMU

You quit, your family dies. Maybe
you die, too.

OTTO

"Meine Familie?" "Bitte"- don't
hurt them.

Isamu slides the knife under his jaw for emphasis.

ISAMU

What did you say?

OTTO

(struggling)

I- I said nothing. They are
innocent. I'll make the report- no
mistakes.

Isamu is unyielding, tension crackles in the air. Otto's
eyes widen with fear. Isamu shoves him forward- brandishing
the knife- a final warning to any future defiance.

EXT. KAILUA SCHOOL YARD - DAY

The sun beams down on a sprawling playground. PAUL stands at the edge of a basketball court, watching HARUTO SUZUKI (14) weave through a flurry of teenagers. Nostalgia flickers across his eyes to a time when he was playing ball himself. MIKE CACCAVALE (15) lunges for a steal, a ferocious swing misses.

MIKE

Stop hogging the ball! Ball hog!

The other boys groan and roll their eyes, beginning to move away in frustration.

PAUL

Wait up! Just a minute-

They hesitate, then return. Haruto pulls the ball back, a curious look toward Paul.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Alright, lets keep it moving.

He motions for the ball. Haruto tosses the ball over. Paul catches it, breaks into a slick dribble then nimbly drops it into the basket. He favors a knee as he returns.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Handling the ball is fun, but...
it's also about sharing the court.

A grin spreads across Healani's face as she approaches.

HEALANI

Looks like someone is keeping busy.

Paul rifles a two-handed pass to Haruto.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

I hear they lost their coach. He
joined the military, right?

HARUTO

Mister, you should be our coach!

Paul pauses, rubbing his knee- a smirk on his lips, recalling his own uncertainty.

PAUL

You just work on making your
teammates better.

Haruto turns in place and executes a perfect bounce pass to Mike. The sound of the ball swishing through the hoop fills the air- the boys cheer in delight.

PAUL (CONT'D)

That's more like it. Remember, it's about lifting each other up.

He glances at Healani, a playful spark lighting up his eyes.

PAUL (CONT'D)

-And I was hoping to lift your spirits with a date tonight.

She raises an eyebrow, feigning a deep thought.

HEALANI

Hm-mm, I might be persuaded if you were to say, coach our team.

Paul's expression shifts, a mix of amusement and hesitation.

PAUL

Sounds like you're trying to negotiate- kind of like a trade deal?

Healani leans in slightly, a teasing glint in her eyes.

HEALANI

Definitely sounds like extortion to me, Mr. Sands.

The two share a laugh, their chemistry discernible. The court erupts with activity as the boys focus on their game, working together like a well-oiled machine.

EXT. KAILUA TOWN - NIGHT

Healani and Paul walk hand in hand, LAUGHTER from a pool hall fills the air. Distant SHOUTS punctuate the night, a suggestion of trouble nearby.

Healani, without warning, releases his hand, backs away, crosses her arms in defense.

HEALANI

I can't help but feel... someone might get hurt.

Paul looks at her, a mix of concern and confusion on his face.

PAUL
What're you talking about?

She looks away, her gaze distant, as if searching memories.

HEALANI
You... me. I know where this road
goes, Paul. It doesn't end well for
me.

Paul steps forward, determined to bridge the divide.

PAUL
I never could think of you that
way.

HEALANI
(sarcastically)
Oh? You don't even know how long
you'll be here.

He pulls her close, kisses her.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You'll see. Tomorrow- at the
basketball court.

Surprised, Healani puts a hand on his chest.

HEALANI
Don't say these things just to be
cute. Are you really going to help
the team?

PAUL
I've played, just never coached-
I'll try.

She brightens, sliding her hand into his.

HEALANI
You know what you need? You need to
believe.

Healani touches her head, then her heart.

HEALANI (CONT'D)
Not just here-
(then)
In here.

PAUL
I've heard this before.

HEALANI
Find your inner aloha. It's not
about what you are, it's about who
you are.

PAUL
Now who's being cute?

HEALANI
Who knows? Maybe this will spark
the career of a hall of fame coach.

As they pass ISAMU and his gang of locals, the atmosphere
chills.

PAUL
Detective Burns- like oil and
water.

HEALANI
I've met him.

PAUL
They sent a blood sample to the
university.

HEALANI
Do they know what it is?

PAUL
Don't have a clue.
(then)
I do think it killed him.

They stop, turn toward each other.

PAUL (CONT'D)
It seems like when I ask for
information they avoid me- do I
have the plague?

HEALANI
Islanders think you're an outsider.
Learn about Hawaii, show them you
care.

PAUL
Easier said than done.

HEALANI

I should tell you. It was me. I'm
the one who found-

Isamu blocks their path, flanked by his gang, baseball bats
clutched- threatening. The atmosphere drips with
anticipation.

ISAMU

Haole, you don't belong here. Get
away from my girl.

Paul stumbles back as Isamu shoves him. A kick lands hard on
Paul's side, knocking him to one knee.

ISAMU (CONT'D)

Yankee dung. You were told to
leave.

Paul rises, anger flaring. A quick right cross stuns Isamu,
but his victory is short-lived. BATS come down hard on his
back... he staggers forward.

PAUL

(grimacing)
I won't let you-

On instinct, Healani rushes forward to protect him.

HEALANI

Stop! You're hurting him.

Isamu lunges at her, grabbing a fist full of hair.

ISAMU

Don't be naaupo- don't be stupid.

Behind them, the SOUND OF WHISTLES echoes closer, POLICE
approaching. Isamu releases Healani, stepping back, blood
trickling from a lip. He wipes his mouth, eyes blazing.

ISAMU (CONT'D)

Remember this, girl. The world is
changing- so will you.

He motions for the gang to follow. They disappear into the
shadows, leaving Paul watching, fury smoldering in his eyes
as the POLICE flood in.

INT. HONOLULU LIBRARY - DAY

Paul enters a library lobby, wincing as he shifts his weight, a hand pressed to his lower back. He pauses, taking a big breath, then focuses on a display table. One text book stands out: HAWAII. He picks it up, opens it, and scans the "Table of Contents." His finger stops on a page line.

Paul makes his way over to the desk of a Hawaiian LIBRARIAN (30s). She turns in her chair, avoiding eye contact, flipping a pen between fingers.

PAUL
(trying for attention)
Excuse me.

She remains fixated on the wall and disinterested. Undeterred, he positions the book for her to see, pointing at the text. Curious, she leans in-

INSERT:

In bold type- HAWAIIAN CENSUS Pg. 391

BACK TO SCENE

The librarian glances at the page, then looks up at Paul, an understanding nod. She points toward a row of book aisles, as if to say, "Good luck." Paul nods in appreciation.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Mahalo.

He scans the shelves with urgency, back complaining at every move, as he moves from aisle to aisle. Paul backs up for a broader look. On a low shelf, something catches his eye- a thick, embroidered hardback. He pulls it out-

INSERT:

Gold bound- REPORT OF THE GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE
CENSUS 1890-1900

BACK TO SCENE

Paul surveys the area for prying eyes, then moves toward a vacant table. Seeing another book on it, the colorful cover tempting- he picks it up, motivated by curiosity.

INSERT:

Illustrated Book Sleeve- POISONOUS FLOWERS AND PLANTS OF THE
UNITED STATES

BACK TO SCENE

Paul places the census report on the table and sits in an adjacent chair. He opens the flora identifier, flipping through the pages but stops short when he finds a particular image... a white-flowered plant with a magnified prickly seed pod. Paul leans in, squinting to read-

INSERT:

SPECIES: D. WRIGHTII

FAMILY: SOLANACEAE (SACRED DATURA)

BACK TO SCENE

As he scans the type, realization dawns on him. Paul turns ashen. A cold sweat breaks out on his forehead.

PAUL
(to himself, panic rising)
No-

He closes the book with a firm push. Shock surges through him. He glances around the library. Paul picks up the report and sinks lower in his chair- heavy with thought.

EXT. NU'UANU HOME - DAY

The Hudson glides into the Nu'uaniu estate driveway, flanked by walls of fitted stone that lead through a lush, tropical canopy. The driveway opens into a circular expanse, where PAUL cuts the engine and steps out.

Square-cut stepping stones lead to a handcrafted front door. Paul hesitates, his hand poised to knock-

Without warning, the door swings wide open. HOUSE BOY JUNICHI (17) greets him with a respectful bow.

JUNICHI
Iwalani not see visitors. Keiki,
come back another time.

NU'UANU HOME

Paul straightens, stepping back. From the side, IWALANI, bright in a colorful mu'umu'u, approaches. Junichi bows again, steps aside.

IWALANI
It's okay, Junichi.

With a soft invitation, Iwalani ushers Paul in. She motions toward a living room love seat. He takes a seat, glancing at the serene, tropical decor.

PAUL
Thank you- thank you for seeing me.

Iwalani gracefully glides over to an interior fish pond, kneeling to swirl her fingers in the water. Colored fish dart and scatter.

IWALANI
Many keiki have stirred their fingers here, yet the fish thrive. It's the Hawaiian in them. They have much koa.

She meets Paul's gaze.

IWALANI (CONT'D)
We have met before. You knew my name. What is yours?

PAUL
Paul- I'm staying with friends outside Kailua Town.

IWALANI
I love Kailua. When I was young, the queen and I spent time there together- she was such a magnificent woman.

Iwalani rises, her form elegant. She curtsies low as if addressing royalty.

IWALANI (CONT'D)
Her soul was full of ho'okipa- the spirit of hospitality. She wrote many songs-
(then, a thought)
Have you heard one of them?

PAUL
Can you hear them at the top of the Pali?

A wistful smile, Iwalani nods in reverence.

IWALANI

The mauna' mele sings to you? Oh,
you must listen.

PAUL

I have. It's why I'm here.

The weight in the air is palpable. Paul vacillates, then continues.

PAUL (CONT'D)

My grandfather came with me to
Hawaii. Before he died-

(hesitant)

I think he was here to see you.

IWALANI

What was his name?

PAUL

William- William Sands. Or maybe
Sanderson?

Iwalani's expression falters, a moment of disbelief crossed with sorrow. Her stare is blank as she grapples with the leaden weight of his words.

IWALANI

No... no.

Silence envelops the room. Her eyes glisten with tears, the sadness of a haunting past spilling over.

IWALANI (CONT'D)

My keiki, my dear keiki- no more
talk.

Paul hesitates, then rises. Iwalani, lost in emotion, approaches him, throwing her arms wide, kissing the air to either side. He takes a deep breath, revealing the money clip and photograph.

PAUL

But... do you remember these?

Iwalani stares at them, shock drawing her back, her face pale. She bows her head, tears streaming down her cheeks.

IWALANI

Iwalani not see visitors. Keiki
come back another time.

Between stifled sobs, Iwalani weeps, her heart breaking, as the past presses down around them.

INT. OTTO KUEHN HOME - NIGHT

Otto ascends a dim stairwell, the walls illuminated by lighted frames showcasing Nazi swastikas and roaring crowds at 1930s Hitler rallies. He pauses, fingers twitching as he absorbs the echos of an age once revered.

He enters a loft, pulls on a chain, a bare bulb flickers to life. A worn chair sits in front of a small, distressed desk, its cracked leather whispering tales of its own. On a 1941 calendar, 'X' marks a chaotic December 1st-5th.

Otto exhales, loosens a collar, an ideology once embraced now a noose around his neck. He takes a seat, the wood creaking under him like ghosts from the past. Reaching over, he clicks on a GRAMOPHONE. A vinyl record spins slow, then fast. The needle descends, imposing its will- German MUSIC spills into the air.

Otto pushes the lamp toward a window sill, its curtain a barrier to the outside world. He pulls back the curtain corner, exposing a barred square of glass.

His WRIST WATCH ticks the seconds, a rhythm of fleeting time. Otto releases the curtain, repeating the ritual, each interval appearing more frantic, almost desperate. With every pull, he feels the tightening grip around his heart. He flashes a PEN, marking an 'X' on December 6th that vibrates with an unspoken fear.

Otto leans back, eyes heavy, surrendering to the solace of sleep. The needle reaches an inner ring. Trapped within, its tortured rhythm scrapes the surface, the dark gloom of war growing ever deeper.

EXT./INT. SUBMARINE - NIGHT

A PERISCOPE breaks the surface of a pitch-black sea. The shadowy waves glisten as specks of distant light glitter on darkened shores. CROSS HAIRS magnify and focus on a hillside home. A lone lamp BLINKS twice, then goes dark.

SUBMARINE CAPTAIN SAKURA (40s), rugged and battle-worn, pulls the periscope in with a decisive motion, locking the latch and handle. Darkness dances over his face, revealing the rigors of leadership as he turns to JAPANESE OFFICER TAKAHASHI (20s), lean and stern, who salutes him.

SAKURA
(subtitle)
Status of decipher reports?

TAKAHASHI

(subtitle)

Sir, codes have been analyzed. They are authentic.

Sakura clenches his fist, reviews a card held in hand.

SAKURA

(subtitle)

The American warship- is it confirmed?

TAKAHASHI

(subtitle)

Yes, it has entered the harbor.

Sakura's eyes smolder, he barks a command.

SAKURA

(subtitle)

Ready all crew for Operation Z- do it now!

Takahashi stands aghast for a moment, the command jolting him. A flicker of doubt lingers before he stiffens, salutes and retreats.

BULKHEAD

ISAMU meditates on the cold, bulkhead floor, the rhythmic POUND of overhead pipes echoing like a heartbeat. The wheel of a hatch door spins, a heavy CLICK resonates.

The door creaks open as Takahashi peers through, hesitating before entering. Isamu, alert, snaps open his eyes. He notices Takahashi, sensing the dread that hangs in the air.

TAKAHASHI

(subtitle)

Most Honorable One. Captain requires your immediate preparation.

Takahashi bows, the gravity of his words sinking in, then exits, closing the door. The hatch wheel spins into place, a finality of purpose.

Isamu springs to his feet and strides into a cramped bathroom to face a MIRROR. He retrieves a STRAIGHT-EDGED RAZOR from a worn cup, holding it high like an oath. Isamu glares at his image, eyes bright with expectation.

ISAMU
 (subtitle)
 World under one roof.

An anthem of resolve.

ISAMU (CONT'D)
 (English, fervently)
 Soon... victory for Japan.

EXT. LANIKAI BAY - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) Mokulua islands rise like silhouettes over Lanikai Bay, O'ahu, Hawaii.
- B) A waning gibbous moon drifts between billowing clouds.
- C) Anchored, a fishing boat sways gently in deep water, tossing to the melodic strum of a UKULELE.

LANIKAI BEACH

The concave beach cradles two lovers. They weave through jeweled dunes of sand, giddy with romance. PAUL catches Healani in a playful hug, his body close to hers.

PAUL
 How'd I get so lucky?

He leans in, eyes sparkling with mischief. Healani, pushes free, laughter bubbling up as she races away, bending to collect a luminous sea shell.

HEALANI
 So you think you're gonna' get
 lucky?

She tosses it playfully- he ducks, laughter resonating in the night. With long strides, he's upon her- their bodies entwine- a quick, heated kiss.

FISHERMAN'S BOAT

Near silence is broken only by the gentle strum of the ukulele. A JAPANESE-HAWAIIAN FISHERMAN (60s) sits at the bow, lost in the glow of a kerosene lamp that flickers and dances, casting shadows across a small cabin. Nets curl in a pile, companions to bamboo rods that dangle like plucked strings over the side.

BAY

BUBBLES rise on the still water as a shape glides beneath, ominous and undefined. A PERISCOPE emerges some distance behind the fishing boat, lurking. Serpent in water, it swims forth, vanishes and-

SUBMARINE

The gleaming hull of a JAPANESE SUBMARINE pierces the surface. An exhalation of air gives way to an external HATCH that rotates open with a muted CLUNK. A DUFFEL BAG appears, landing with a CLANK of metal on the deck. The SLIM FIGURE in ninja blue springs forth into a crouch.

ISAMU scans the sable darkness, his breath shallow. He hoists the bag over a shoulder, the hatch sealing behind. On nimble feet he traverses the deck, stopping to balance, then executes a perfect ballet leap onto the fishing boat.

BOAT DECK

Isamu lays down the duffel and draws a gleaming knife from his belt sheath. The bright blade catches the moonlight as he rises, silent and stealthy, to slip past the cabin. Without warning, he pounces on the fisherman from behind. The KNIFE plunges deep, silencing the ukulele- it hits hard on the deck, neck broken like his victim's final breath.

Isamu steps inside the wheel house, the lamp fades to darkness. He re-emerges, surveying the quiet night. Reaching down, he drags the corpse across the deck, leaving a trail of murderous ink against the wood. Leaning the body against the side rail, he pays his respects.

ISAMU

Rest, rojin. Rest. Nippon-koku
applauds your sacrifice.

Isamu methodically cleans the knife, sheathing it with a soft click before hoisting the cadaver overboard.

LANIKAI BEACH

Boats toss in the shallow surf. A motor rumbles in the offing, growing louder. The fisherman's boat grinds into the wet beach, an ANCHOR drops down into the too-still sea. The motor sputters to a stop as Isamu slides off, wading into thigh deep water.

Moonlight breaks free from a cloud, spilling silver across the boat. He reaches for the bow, revealing the bite of the crescent scar glistening with saltwater.

PAUL

Isamu-

Isamu recoils against the boat's side, tension thick in the air.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I know it's you.

Isamu unsheathes the knife, gripping it, teeth clenched. He turns with precision to drop neck deep into the water, gliding away as Paul treads carefully toward the fishing boat.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Leave Healani alone. She's not yours. She never was. Stay away from us.

Paul steps back, turning to leave. From near the water's edge, Isamu lurks, a predator stalking his prey. A sudden movement behind Paul- the steel of the knife presses against his jugular.

ISAMU

I should cut you open like a pua'a.

Healani gasps, stepping closer, fear engraved on her face.

HEALANI

Isamu- no!

Isamu cocks his head, a moment of conflict hesitates his dark urge.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

Let him go. Please, I promise. You and me, together. Just let him go.

He inches the knife away, shoving Paul forward.

ISAMU

Lolo- lucky for you she made a good choice.

HEALANI

(Hawaiian)

You got what you wanted, now go.

Isamu points the knife at Healani, his resolve hardening.

ISAMU
 (intense whisper)
 I will deal with you later.

With snake-like speed, he sheaths the knife, slipping back into the shadows. Paul scowls and moves to follow but Healani grips his forearm, tight.

HEALANI
 Paul!

He begins to resist, then eases back. She leans into him, their forms turn, melting into the darkness. Isamu slinks toward the boat, hoisting the duffel bag and retreating up the beach. A dog BARKS- its sound cut short- a yelp, a wounded animal, followed by an eerie silence.

INLET - (LATER)

Healani and Paul walk hand-in-hand toward a secluded cove, moonlight waltzing on the pristine sand.

HEALANI
 Isamu is so hewa- so evil.
 Fishermen don't come in that late.

PAUL
 (firmly)
 He won't get to you. He has to walk over my dead body first.

HEALANI
 We should report this.

PAUL
 Now? He's gone. Tomorrow, okay?

He pulls her closer, their connection compelling.

HEALANI
 What am I going to do with you?

Paul eases her down onto the sand, removes his shirt to place it beneath her. As she leans back, a strap slips from her shoulder. His mouth finds hers, their kiss deepening as inquisitive waves whisper secrets to the shore.

EXT. LANIKAI BEACH - DAY

Morning sun streams through overcast skies. Turquoise water shimmers, glistening like jewels dancing on the calm.

SUPERIMPOSE: "DECEMBER 7, 1941 7:52 A.M."

PAUL and HEALANI stroll along the shore, their laughter mingling with the gentle shore break. Healani glances at him, a hint of concern hovering on her brow.

HEALANI
(biting her lip)
We should get back. Jorge will be
looking for me.

A suspended moment hangs between them. They pause, the quiet beach briefly interrupted by the sounds of seagulls.

On a sudden, LARGE EXPLOSIONS erupt in the distance, MACHINE GUN fire ripping through the tranquility. They spin toward Mokapu, adrenaline pumping. Black SMOKE mushrooms above the air base, darkening the sky. Airplanes hover like hawks, then BANK toward the ground.

PAUL
(puzzled)
On a Sunday?

Their eyes widen as two planes peel away, slicing the sky toward Lanikai Beach. One veers off and DIVES to deliver gunfire that punctuates the air, each rapid burst sends chills down their spines.

HEALANI
(voice low)
What's happening?

They back up in fear, horror dawning as RISING SUNS reflect off the METAL skin of two JAPANESE ZEROS who merge, dropping low like pelicans to fly straight toward them. The ROAR of MACHINE GUNS erupts. Tracks of water and sand spray around them. Healani screams, her voice raw and terrified. They race for cover, hearts pounding like drums.

The aircraft bank up, swirling away- pilots in the Zeros mock salute- a steep climb takes them into the chaos above. EXPLOSIONS continue to echo from the air base. Paul grips Healani's hand as they huddle together behind dense greenery. A truck comes to a screeching halt. The door swings open and JORGE leaps out, frantic and wild-eyed.

JORGE
 (breathless)
 The Japs are attackin'! We need to
 go- NOW!

Healani and Paul sprint toward the truck, a welcome sanctuary from the metal storm.

PAUL
 (urgent)
 Get in! We'll figure it out
 together!

They leap into the cab, united but confused by their witness to war.

INT./EXT. TRUCK - DAY - (MOVING)

White knuckles strangle the steering wheel as Jorge presses the accelerator, the truck lurches forward.

JORGE
 They shot at us! Can you believe
 it?

He cranks up the truck radio, CHURCH MUSIC blaring, a contrast to the mayhem beyond.

JORGE (CONT'D)
 Doesn't anyone care what's
 happening?!

Paul leans out of the window, eyes scanning the sky, resolve in his expression.

PAUL
 The navy base- they need our help!

HEALANI
 We have to find Lieutenant
 Billings!

Jorge's frown deepens as he shifts gears, careening the truck forward.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

The serene Sunday morning is shattered as Jorge slams on the brakes. Dust spirals up around them as he jumps out and sprints to the front door. Paul and Healani tumble out, running toward the big house. She pounds on the door.

HEALANI
 (desperate)
 Lieutenant Billings! Lieutenant
 Billings!

The sound of a chair scraping against the floor resonates from within. Footsteps hastily approach, the door swings open. Naval officer LIEUTENANT BILLINGS (40s) bleary-eyed but alert, steps forward into view.

BILLINGS
 Mornin' Healani. What's the racket?

HEALANI
 They're attacking Mokapu! They shot
 at us. We need your guidance.

Billings blinks in disbelief, gravity setting in as he meets her gaze.

BILLINGS
 Holy mackerel. Let's move- I'll
 grab my gear!

He spins around and bolts back inside.

BILLINGS (CONT'D) (O.S.)
 I need a ride to Kaneohe.

Paul leans in closer to be sure he's heard.

PAUL
 We're heading there now.

Jorge rushes back to the truck, anxiety crossing his face.

JORGE
 The phones are down. Stay here,
 Healani... keep tryin', okay?

Jorge hops into the driver's seat.

JORGE (CONT'D)
 We gotta roll!

Healani looks at Paul, fear evident in her eyes.

HEALANI
 I'm terrified, You don't have to do
 this-

PAUL

I'm coming back. I promise. I can't
lose you.

A moment of intense eye contact- they lean in closer,
sharing a kiss filled with unspoken fears and resolve.
Billings, now in full uniform, bursts out of the house
joining Paul.

BILLINGS

Let's go- there's no time to waste.

They pile into the truck. Healani cups her hands around her
mouth, calling after them.

HEALANI

I'll call the Gillespies!

Jorge revs the engine, kicking up dirt as they speed away.

INT. CHEVY TRUCK - DAY - (MOVING)

The men bounce on the truck seat as the aging vehicle
rattles over uneven terrain. A RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT interrupts
the church music, jolting them from the intense silence.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Pearl Harbor is under attack! Pearl
Harbor is under attack!

A static hiss fills the truck, amplifying their shared
shock. Paul's eyes widen, heart racing.

PAUL (V.O.)

This can't be happening.

BILLINGS

Damn. It's the real McCoy. We're
sittin' ducks.

Jorge tightens his grip on the steering wheel.

JORGE

We'll get you there, Lieutenant.
Hold on.

EXT. KANEOHE NAVAL STATION - DAY

The truck roars past a crushed guard gate. A lifeless body hangs from a guard shack window, an eerie reminder of the insanity. A dazed, bloodied sentry stumbles out, desperation flooding his eyes. They zoom past him, urgency rising.

BILLINGS

Pull over-

The truck grinds to a halt. Flames leap from a charred jeep, thick smoke rising above them. They scramble out. Billings points to the sky, adrenaline flooding his veins.

BILLINGS (CONT'D)

Here they come!

The ROAR of plane engines grow louder, overwhelming. A ZERO closes in overhead, its intent clear.

BILLINGS (CONT'D)

Get down!

Paul and Jorge dive low, rolling under the truck. MACHINE GUN fire erupts, raking the ground as Billings sprints away. Bullets tear through the air, combing the area like a relentless pack in pursuit- they DANCE across the metal truck bed in a chaotic pattern of fate. In mid-stride, the shots ring true. Billings collapses, lifeless.

PAUL

We can't stay here!

They roll back out, urgency and fear propelling them. Paul's eyes widen as he spots a barracks.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Over there!

They sprint toward the garrison, breathless and terrified. Jorge's vocal comes in sobs-

JORGE

Let's get out of here!

Like a falcon swooping low, a Zero takes aim, diving for the kill.

PAUL

Jorge! Run!

Paul shoves him forward just as a MACHINE GUN volley rips through the ground behind Jorge. They slide down a shallow grade into a stand of coconut trees. Jorge winces, grabbing at an ankle.

A larger bird of prey swoops down from the sky. A JAPANESE BOMBER dives toward an adjacent AIRSTRIP. The heavy thump of BOMBS shakes the ground beneath them, creating large craters on the landing surface.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Find cover!

Paul and Jorge huddle close under the trees, each moment more mind-numbing than the last.

INT. HONOLULU FBI BUILDING - DAY

Jack strides into a chaotic scene- a large office suffocated by frantic energy. The steady cacophony of RINGING PHONES and agitated typing creates an urgent symphony under the stark, fluorescent lights.

A RECEPTIONIST (20s) battles the mayhem, cradling a receiver against an ear and shoulder, while juggling a second call. She nods toward a nearby office, prompting Jack to redirect his focus. He nimbly cuts through the turmoil, pushing through the door to a small, cluttered office. On the practical desk, a NAMEPLATE gleams.

ROBERT L. SHIVERS

SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE

BACK TO SCENE

ROBERT SHIVERS (40s), slender, black hair center-parted, sits hunched over his phone. His expression reveals the weight of the moment. He cups a hand over the receiver.

SHIVERS

Governor Poindexter.

Jack steps further inside, closing the door with a quiet click. Robert's speech takes on an air of forced calm.

SHIVERS (CONT'D)

Yes, sir. It's necessary. I agree with General Short.

His frown deepens- a reflection of the heavy burden. He shifts, bracing himself.

SHIVERS (CONT'D)

Yes-

(a moment of silence)

Yes, of course. But we can't wait.
You must issue the order. Agents
are in the field.

Jack stands at the edge of the room, leaning on every word. He glances at Robert, whose lips tighten as he listens.

SHIVERS (CONT'D)

I understand, sir... I know.

A pause stretches- thick with uncertainty. Jack braces for the response that could change everything.

SHIVERS (CONT'D)

I promise. We'll do everything in
our power.

(then)

Thank you, sir. God bless.

He hangs up, a mixture of relief and despair washing over him. Jack sinks into a chair beside the desk.

SHIVERS (CONT'D)

I can't believe this. What a
nightmare. The Governor was crying.

Jack shakes his head in disbelief, his mind racing with the previous events.

JACK

So is it a go?

The question hangs in the air, as if the walls themselves breathe with anticipation.

SHIVERS

It's a go.

The reality of their next move looms over them. Jack's expression hardens, underlining the stark choices they now face.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Jorge brings the truck to a shuddering halt, biting a fingernail, his grip firm on the steering wheel. Paul swings the truck door wide open and bolts toward the front door. A NOTE pinned firm catches his eye-

INSERT:

In fine cursive-

All OK

MEET ME AT GILLESPIE HOUSE

LOVE, HEALANI

BACK TO SCENE

In an electric jolt of relief, Paul rips the paper from the door, reading Healani's message over and over again.

PAUL

Thank God.

He hesitates, letting her words sink in. A swell of guilt rises- should he have reported the submarine?

PAUL (CONT'D) (V.O.)

What if... I could've prevented
this?

The thought gnaws at him as he scurries back to the truck, now both a refuge and a place to escape.

INT./EXT. TRUCK - DAY - (MOVING)

The cab buzzes with static from the radio. A backdrop of beach blurs past as military vehicles surround MARINES who dig foxholes. Hedgehog barriers dot the shoreline- PILLBOXES aim machine guns toward the sea.

PAUL

That submarine- I should've
reported it.

Jorge's face darkens as he lifts his foot off the accelerator, the truck decelerating, tension gripping like a vise.

JORGE

(glancing at Paul)

Look-

A military ROAD BLOCK looms ahead, armed MARINES stationed like watchmen, weapons drawn and ready. MARINE PRIVATE DAVIDSON (20s) steps forward, his rifle aimed and stance alert.

DAVIDSON

Halt!

Davidson approaches, eyes scanning every inch of the truck.

DAVIDSON (CONT'D)

Where'd you come from? Where you
goin'?

He surveys the truck bed. Jorge leans out, sweat glistening on his brow.

JORGE

Kaneohe- heading for Lanikai!

Davidson studies Jorge.

DAVIDSON

You armed?

PAUL

No- just trying to get to safety!

Davidson's eyes bore into Paul, who locks eyes with the Marine, determined to prove they're no threat.

DAVIDSON

What's the rush?

Paul swallows hard.

PAUL

We've got people waiting on us. We
need to get through!

Davidson hesitates, the urgency of Paul's words resonating. Finally, he relents, giving a thumbs up. The checkpoint guardrail swings open. The Marines wave them through- the air still tinged with suspicion- underscoring the uncertainty of what lies ahead.

INT. LANIKAI BEACH COTTAGE - NIGHT

A living room sofa faces chairs. The dim glow of a SHORT WAVE RADIO TRANSMITTER sputters sporadic updates, wafting concern into the air.

MR. G and NAN, their hands intertwined, share a silent understanding. Healani clings to PAUL, wide-eyed, her breathing labored- anxious. Jorge limps around the room, every step a reminder of his recent flirt with death.

SHORT WAVE RADIO TRANSMITTER (V.O.)
 (filtered)
 Possible Japanese parachutes seen
 near St. Louis Heights. Confirm and
 report. Alpha hotel six out.

An uncomfortable silence as the impact of the announcement settles in. All eyes are glued on Jorge, who struggles to maintain composure despite the obvious pain on his face.

NAN
 (gasp)
 Jorge- your leg!

Jorge stops, glances down at his pant leg, a ruby-red stain darkening the fabric. With a pained expression, he lifts the trouser revealing an ugly open wound that oozes beneath a torn sock.

NAN (CONT'D)
 Let me get something for that. You
 might need a doctor.

Without waiting for a response, she stands and ducks out of the room.

MR. G
 (eyes on Jorge)
 We heard Battleship Row was lit up-
 the whole world is watching.

SHORT WAVE RADIO TRANSMITTER (V.O.)
 Japanese mini-sub. Bellows Field...
 Waimanalo Point.

Jorge grips the back of a chair for support as he steels himself against the pain.

NAN (O.S.)
 (returning with first aid kit)
 Someone said they were invading the
 North Shore. Thank God it wasn't
 true-

As she enters, the radio crackles again, enhancing the mood.

MR. G
 (interrupting)
 They declared martial law-

JORGE
 (grim)
 Good reason to stay inside. We
 should prep for the blackout.

Nan kneels beside Jorge, her gaze softening, nurse-like as she focuses on his injury.

NAN

Not before we dress that wound.

As she tends to his laceration, Paul and Healani share a glance that speaks volumes- of fractured plans, rising doubts and an uncertain future.

HEALANI

What if they do come to our shores?

The question hangs in the air, a bleak reminder of their reality. Paul looks out the window into the darkness.

PAUL

Then we fight like hell.

INT. LANIKAI BEACH COTTAGE - DAY

A soft glow of first light filters through the screened Lanai. On a cot, PAUL spoons HEALANI, content and peaceful. JORGE kicks his butt. Paul stirs but rolls away, feigning sleep. He nudges him again, more insistent.

JORGE

Rise and shine, Hollywood. Follow me.

PAUL sits up, yawning as HEALANI moans softly, resettling into her blankets.

PAUL

What the hell, Jorge?

He stretches, shaking off sleep, swinging his feet onto the floor.

JORGE

C'mon. No time to waste.

Jorge shuffles into the living room, Paul follows him, still half-asleep. MR. G emerges from a hallway, rubbing sleep from his eyes.

MR. G

What's all the commotion about?

JORGE

Glad you're up, Mr. G. We have a situation.

EXT. PATIO - KENJI

Kenji paces in the shadows, distant ocean waves crashing behind him. As Jorge, Paul and Mr. G step onto the patio, Kenji spins around, bowing with a purpose.

KENJI

Much thanks Mr. Jorge- Mr. G, Mr. Paul. I fear they will take me today.

Mr. G steps closer, an edge in his voice.

MR. G

Who's coming for you?

Kenji glances around, fidgeting, his nervousness evident.

KENJI

(hushed)

Shh... They arrest many of us. We've heard troubling things.

PAUL

Such as?

KENJI

If you with Buddhist or make trip to mother country, you suspect. I make trip last year- bury grandfather.

MR. G

That doesn't make you a criminal. How can we help? You risked your life coming over here.

KENJI

Must hide personal things. No hide-no safe.

MR. G

We don't treat our neighbors this way.

KENJI

I know this to happen. You not stop. There is other thing. Not everyone good neighbor.

Kenji clasps his hands, a gesture of desperation.

KENJI (CONT'D)

Someone is here who should not be.
He look like me- not act like me.
He was with German man at temple.

JORGE

Is that a problema?

KENJI

They not go there- then bombing
start.

MR. G

Would we recognize him?

KENJI

Man have scar on hand- he is up to
no good.

PAUL

I know who it is.

JORGE

A real jerk.

PAUL

You should report this.

Kenji shakes his head.

KENJI

No! Man like me- no trust.

The look at each other- Kenji needs their help.

EXT. KAILUA SCHOOL - DAY

Overcast skies hang overhead, casting a muted pallor.
Jorge's truck crunches over gravel as it rolls onto the
Kailua School grounds. Paul steps out, glancing at the
metamorphosis. Jorge speeds away, leaving him behind.

Tents are strewn about. Somber women shuffle through the
haphazard disorder, some weeping softly, others crying out-
CHILDREN giggle, playing hide and seek nearby. The contrast
of innocence and grief is audible.

A RED CROSS van arrives, siren muted, its lighting a beacon
of hope that attracts. CIVILIANS and SOLDIERS surround it
like moths to a flame, drawn by the promise of aid. HEALANI
approaches Paul, her face a mask of anguish, and collapses
into his arms.

HEALANI

All of these families. Their
 husbands, their fathers-
 (her voice breaks)
 The wounded are in a classroom.
 Hospitals are full.

PAUL

How can I help?

She wipes a tear, her finger pointing toward MR. G, who unloads a truck piled high with supplies.

HEALANI

Mr. G- he'll know what to do.

Paul nods once, gently releasing her, filled with a new purpose. He strides over to Mr. G who turns just in time to toss him a stack of blankets. Paul snatches them out of the air, a brief smile that slips past the otherwise grimness.

MR. G

Glad you're here. Distribute those-
 help with the food. It's all hands
 on deck.

A HAM RADIO broadcast cuts through the air like a knife.

BROADCASTER (V.O.)

Now hear this! Now hear this!
 Today, at 12:30 P.M. Eastern Time
 the United States Congress
 officially declared war with Japan.

The impact of the news floats like a cloud over the scene. A SUDDEN SQUEAL of brakes disrupts the moment as a SEDAN rolls up. Two LARGE FBI MEN (20s) in dark suits jump out, authority radiating from them.

An Isamu GANG LOCAL (30s) unloading food from a military jeep, glances nervously as they approach him. They wrench his arms behind him, slapping handcuffs on his wrists, escorting him to the sedan like a hunted animal.

A POLICE CRUISER pulls in, its DRIVER'S WINDOW rolling down. Jack leans out, scanning the area until his gaze lands on Mr. G.

JACK

Mr. G- over here!

Paul hands out a blanket, looks back just in time to see Jack's approving nod directed at him. Their eyes meet- an

unspoken recognition forged among the distrust. The window rolls back up. Both vehicles drive away in silence, leaving behind a charged atmosphere in their wake. Mr. G walks back toward Paul, urgency marked on his face.

MR. G

It's happening everywhere. They arrested Otto Kuehn.

They exchange a glance of camaraderie- a shared resolve for whatever comes next.

INT. LANIKAI BEACH COTTAGE - NIGHT

Folded cardboard shields a flickering candle, the soft light caressing the walls. A black curtain drapes a bay window, blocking the dangers beyond. A faint sound of dishes clink in the kitchen sink, breaking the silence.

Healani and Paul sit at the kitchen table, a chasm of unspoken words between them. Nan cleans a dish, her hands gliding through the soapy water. She glances over a shoulder, sensing the tension.

NAN

Your letter to the coroner-

PAUL

(interrupting, weary)

I know- all this death. They're swamped.

HEALANI

(leaning in, intensity increasing)

But you have information. You must try.

PAUL

(voice low)

I can't make the war go away.

HEALANI

(searching his eyes)

Where is it?

PAUL

In the guest room- it won't bring him back.

HEALANI

What?

Healani's temper is of the shortest. She rises, towering over him like a tempest.

HEALANI

(voice rising)

What do you mean? It was me... me!
I was the one who found your
grandfather.

(then)

You owe him. You owe us. You-

(Hawaiian)

You can't stop believing!

Her frustration boils over, she storms out of the room, leaving Paul slumped at the table.

PAUL

I wasn't giving up.

NAN turns off the faucet and wipes her hands, her voice gentle, yet firm.

NAN

She's tired. We're all tired. The
morning will bring a new day.

Nan grips his shoulder in a quiet act of comfort.

NAN (CONT'D)

In the eye of the storm, you will
find strength.

A soft beat follows her words. Paul grasps her hand in consensus. He stares into the shadows- and as for Healani, into the unknown.

INT. LANIKAI BEACH COTTAGE - DAY

Paul is asleep on the living room couch. The CREAK of a front door hinge awakens him. He squints against the light and looks over. He sees Healani in the doorway, dressed to ride, her expression conflicted.

HEALANI

I'm going home, Paul. I can't stay
here- not when things are falling
apart.

The door SLAMS shut behind her. Paul scratches his head, bewildered. He drops back down, staring at the ceiling, his heart heavy.

EXT. LANIKAI BEACH COTTAGE - DAY

Healani moves to untie her horse from a nearby post. The mood shifts as the sound of the ocean recedes, replaced by an eerie stillness. Isamu sneaks in from behind, pulling her back. A gloved hand covers her mouth as he presses a knife to her neck. His eyes glint darkly, hard as flint, cold and calculating.

ISAMU

(leans closer, whispers)

Be quiet- or feel my rage if you
don't... it's better this way.

They back away toward an idling car, gang members lurking inside. A back door swings open, Isamu pushes Healani down and in, a hood slips over her head as she gasps. Isamu scans the area, stress hovering in the air. He slides in beside her, the door SLAMMING shut as the car speeds away.

COTTAGE - (LATER)

The persistent RING of a telephone slices through the silence. Paul jolts awake and scrambles to rise, wiping sleep from his eyes. He locates the vibrating telephone and pads across the living room. He snatches the receiver, his breath quickening.

PAUL

Hello- Gillespies.

JORGE (V.O.)

(filtered)

Hollywood... meet me in Kailua.

PAUL

What's going on?

JORGE (V.O.)

(filtered)

Just hurry. I need help with the
horses.

The line GOES DEAD. Paul stares at the receiver, alarm pooling in his gut. He rushes to stare out the window, eyes scanning the quiet outside, heart racing at the thought of Healani.

EXT. KAILUA TOWN - DAY

The main street lies empty and silent, a ghost town under the morning sun. Dust swirls as JORGE and PAUL ride their horses down it. The faint glow of cigarette embers move among U.S. ARMY SOLDIERS, who linger at street corners, their eyes wary.

JORGE
(voice tight)
Healani didn't come home.

PAUL
She left her horse- that can't be good.

Jorge nods toward the cinema marquee, a reminder of better times.

JORGE
There's a vacant building behind the theater. Someone was there last night- I can't shake what he said.

PAUL
You mean Kenji?

JORGE
Yeah. I went looking for him. He's in custody.

PAUL
(shock)
No way! Poor guy.

He glances at Jorge, concern creasing his brow.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You think it was Isamu?

JORGE
(voice low)
Healani called me this morning. I rode here to meet her.

PAUL
You think she's in trouble?
(slow realization)
If he took her-

JORGE
The man is obsessed- we should check that building.

They lock eyes, the gravity of the situation washing over them. With sharp kicks, their horses surge forward, galloping down the street, adrenaline pushing them into action and toward potential danger.

INT. VACANT BUILDING - ISAMU - DAY

Isamu pulls a trip wire across the entryway of a massive sliding door. He secures it to the firing pin of an anchored GRENADE, his breath shallow and focused. The distant SOUND of galloping horses reverberates through the empty building. Isamu creeps to a front-facing window.

TETHER POST

Jorge and Paul gallop in, boots thudding against the ground as they dismount. The creaking of leather fills the stillness as they tie up their horses. Paul meets Jorge's eye, a silent exchange of resolve forms between them. Paul signals, suggesting they split up. Jorge nods, determined and focused. They each take their own cautious approach to the looming building.

VACANT BUILDING

Isamu snatches the duffel bag, slinging it over his shoulder, retreating to the rear of the building. His eyes flick back, a sinister smile curling his lips. In a smirk of satisfaction, the assassin slips silently into the darkness of a hallway exit.

VACANT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Jorge peers through a fixed window, communicating his plan with firm gestures. Paul, ever watchful, nods as he edges around the corner, disappearing from view.

SIDE OF VACANT BUILDING

Paul edges toward the rear of the structure, an ominous quiet hanging in the air. Isamu bursts from his cover, sprinting away from the building.

PAUL

Jorge- Jorge! Over here-

A deafening BLAST erupts. Paul whips around, horror overtaking him as a colossal plume of smoke spirals into the sky. He barrels toward the front of the building, desperation fueling his steps.

SLIDING DOOR

Amidst charred, smoldering ruins, Jorge lies bruised and battered, surrounded by the wreckage of the door. Paul drops to his knees, his hands trembling as he cradles Jorge's head.

JORGE
Sorry, Hollywood.

Paul's eyes brim with tears.

PAUL
It's okay, amigo. I've got you.

JORGE
Take care of my sis'-
(gaze fading)
Keep her... safe.

With a faint smile, Jorge exhales, succumbing to his wounds. Paul collapses, raw grief igniting a fire within. He clenches his fists, the pain twisting in his chest as he lets out a guttural scream. The SOUND of APPROACHING SOLDIERS slams into his consciousness, swirling his sorrow into blistering anger.

He gazes into the distance, eyes narrowing with determination. Rising, he rushes to untie his horse, resolve in every line of his face. Swinging onto the saddle, he yells for speed. The horse launches into a gallop, bolting away as Paul chases the shadow of vengeance.

EXT: KAWAI NUI - DAY

Paul leaps off the horse, tying it up with shaking hands. The swaying reeds hiss in the wind, cloaking his search. He tears them apart revealing a trampled path leading deeper into the marsh. He looks back; all is clear. Paul slips between the tall stalks. The leafy curtain closes and conceals the journey that now takes him into the unknown.

EXT. MAUNA - DAY

PAUL, fueled by a mix of rage and desperation, follows an elevated path. The path steepens as a fogdog streams through. The sudden sound of metal scraping against stone cuts through the air above. Heart hammering, Paul peeks from behind an overhang.

ISAMU, knife clenched in his teeth, drags the duffel bag to a level area. Healani sits on the ground behind, bound in the shadows, a rag tied over her mouth. Her eyes widen in disbelief and fear at the sight of Paul, kindling a fierce decisiveness in him.

ISAMU stands tall, exuding dominance as he opens the bag. A TRIPOD unfolds with a CLUNK, an evil reminder of his intentions. Paul gathers himself, inching closer, raw emotion painted on his face.

PAUL
(with grit)
Not today- time to believe.

With a burst of energy, Paul charges straight for Isamu.

MAUNA

Isamu, caught off guard, spins just in time. The knife flies from his mouth, its lethal blade sliding close to Healani. Paul lands a blow to the duffel bag. It bounces away, tumbling off the steep cliff.

He rebounds, but Isamu retaliates with a heavy strike that sends Paul staggering. With a primal yell, Paul lashes out, a solid punch knocks Isamu back. Each kick and every strike urges him on to protect Healani.

Healani leans forward, straining against her bindings, fingers just short of the knife. She grits her teeth, scoots closer and... closes her fingers around it.

Paul snatches the tripod, hurling it at ISAMU, but he dodges, grinning at the attempt. In a flurry of blows, Isamu gets the better of it. Paul drops to a knee, down but not defeated.

Healani saws at her leg restraints, the material fraying against the knife's edge, each cut a testament to her persistence. ISAMU grabs a LOG from the ground, TWIRLS it, then strikes Paul flush on the temple. Paul collapses, disoriented.

ISAMU
 (disdain)
 Such fools- first your grandfather,
 now you.

Isamu revels in his triumph, towering over a struggling Paul.

ISAMU (CONT'D)
 Healani is mine- it's time for you
 to die.
 (then)
 Hakko ichiu!

As the CRESCENT SCAR rises, LOG poised to fall, Healani summons all her courage and stabs ISAMU in the back. He howls in agony.

ISAMU
 No!

Paul spins on instinct, whipping a leg at an ankle. ISAMU slams down hard, sliding backward toward the abyss, hands clawing for a grip. He slides downward and off- eyes wide with terror... only to have an outcrop halt the fall. ISAMU steadies himself, relief washing over him.

PRECIPICE

Healani, rag doll-limp, slides down beside Paul. With wolf-like cunning, Isamu cries out.

ISAMU CONT'D
 Help!- HELP ME!

The weight of her gaze falls upon Paul. He nods. With the little strength he has, he crawls closer to the edge, extending a hand down toward ISAMU.

ISAMU (CONT'D)
 Don't leave me like this!

Paul extends himself, struggling to keep his footing, a surge of vulnerability flooding over him. Isamu senses the opportunity, grabbing at Paul's shirt, pulling him closer to the edge. The ground beneath Paul shifts- the sudden horror of betrayal crystallizing.

HEALANI
 Paul! Watch out!

With a sudden burst of strength, he wedges a shoe into a crevice as he throws his free arm wide- fingers clasp the limb of a bush- bending as it holds firm.

ISAMU'S grip fails as the rock beneath him shatters. He cascades off, flailing at the air.

ISAMU
(screaming)
NOOOOO!

Tree branches rush up to embrace. Paul leans out over the edge, watching as Isamu and the duffel bag disappear into the treetop canopy. Shaking, he leans back against a rock, breathing heavily. His eyes flutter, the weight of the battle taking its toll. As his vision blurs, one last image of Healani lingers.

PAUL
(whispers)
Healani... I thought I lost you.

Darkness spreads, pulling Paul into unconsciousness.

INT. QUEENS HOSPITAL - PAUL (P.O.V.) - DAY

The blurred image of a HOSPITAL NURSE (40s) in medical scrubs, sharpens. She is checking a chart. Her face softens as she glances at Paul- a nod of approval before exiting. As she departs, a beam of sunlight filters through a window, casting a gentle warmth around Paul.

He blinks, his perspective clearing. Healani sits in a chair beside the bed, her eyes red-rimmed. She notices he is awake and rises to give him a gentle hug.

HEALANI
I thought I lost you, too.

Paul's gaze meets her tear-filled eyes, the gravity of Jorge's loss sinking in.

PAUL
Jorge... I couldn't save him.

Healani stifles a cry, the enormity of their grief settling between them. She touches his arm tenderly.

HEALANI
He would be proud of your bravery.
(hesitant)
I... I mailed that letter.

A bittersweet smile flickers across her lips.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

What would I do without you?

Paul leans back, his expression shifting from earnestness to light humor.

PAUL

Fall in love with me?

HEALANI

I have good news- someone special is here.

She moves back toward the door, waving for an entry. Keoni and Iwalani enter, she radiant despite the sorrow that remains in the air. She hangs a LEI on the T-frame of a drip dispenser.

IWALANI

It's pikake. They smell so sweet. I hope the nurses let you keep them.

Keoni steps closer to the bed.

IWALANI (CONT'D)

Keoni, this is Paul. Paul, meet Keoni.

KEONI

Nice to meet you, Paul.

Paul hesitates, his emotions still mixed.

PAUL

Nice- nice to meet you, too.

KEONI

I'm a volunteer here at the hospital. We support those who are recovering. If you need anything, just ask.

Paul touches the gauze on his head.

PAUL

Any spare memory? I seem to have misplaced mine.

A collective empathy softens the atmosphere.

KEONI

I'll see what I can find- just no promises. I best leave you now. Take care- Aloha.

He backs away. Before exiting, Keoni blows a kiss toward Iwalani who returns it with a soft smile.

HEALANI

Iwalani has a wonderful surprise for you.

PAUL

Nothing can surprise me now.

She shares a knowing look with Iwalani.

HEALANI

Oh, this might.

Iwalani settles on the edge of the bed, serious but gentle.

IWALANI

Remember when you came to see me? You carried such heavy news.

Lost in thought, she gathers herself.

IWALANI (CONT'D)

Your grandfather- what a wonderful man. I should've known he would try to return again.

Healani responds, her eyes filled with understanding.

IWALANI (CONT'D)

It was a troubled time- so much hate. But despite everything, we had love- aloha hohonu.

Iwalani gazes off, her expression a mixture of remembrance and hope.

FLASHBACK

EXT. RAIN FOREST FOOTPATH - DAY

A vibrant tropical forest envelops the pathway where Iwalani and William walk, sounds of nature all around them. They approach a breathtaking waterfall that cascades into a pristine lagoon. Eyes filled with love, their lips share a tender yet passionate kiss.

IWALANI (V.O.)

I had to see the queen- share our
dreams of marriage.

(then)

But then came the coup de'tat...
they shot me... I thought it was
the end.

NU'UANU HOME - DAY

A GUARD pulls hard on the reins of the royal carriage,
bringing it to a halt. The door creaks open. William
emerges, his face a mask of urgency and fear as he lifts a
comatose Iwalani from the coach, cradling her tenderly.

IWALANI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Thanks to William, I survived.

(pause)

And though he warned me, my loyalty
to the monarchy cost us both
dearly.

As William carries Iwalani inside, her eyes flutter under
closed lids, revealing the turmoil within.

IWALANI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I helped them hide their guns- my
heart was divided, torn between
duty and love.

A brief SILENCE blankets the scene, lingering on the weight
of Iwalani's choices and William's love.

BAMBOO HUT - DAY - IWALANI

Arm in a sling, IWALANI hesitates before opening the door to
a bamboo hut. Her breath catches, heart pounding in her
ears. She steels herself, pushes the door open, and scans
the area, tense and alert.

In the murkiness, HAWAIIAN MEN emerge, armed with GUNS,
their movements swift and coordinated. They stream past her
and vanish inside the hut. Iwalani's face tightens with
worry as she glances about, her senses on high alert.

IWALANI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The repression- it grew even worse.

With a furtive look over her shoulder, she retreats inside,
shutting the door with a soft click.

SUGARCANE FIELD - DAY

The harsh sun beats down on a SUGAR CANE FIELD. Armed militia confront HAWAIIAN SUGAR CANE WORKERS who clutch picket signs in defiance. The oppressive atmosphere crackles with their resistance.

GUNSHOTS echo, followed by shouts and the clattering of signs hitting the ground. A RIFLE stock SLAMS down on a worker's nose- a sickening CRUNCH as blood sprays. The man collapses, groaning. Chaos erupts, the workers fighting back, but brutal hits retaliate.

IWALANI (V.O.)

They arrested many. It was just a matter of time. But your kapuna kane protected me- he removed the guns.

The sounds of straining bodies, shouts of defiance, and cries of pain mix with the rustling sugarcane, creating a clatter of desperation.

BAMBOO HUT - DAY - WILLIAM

William exits a bamboo hut, rifles in hand. The sun filters through the tall reeds, casting striped shadows on a dirt path. He lingers for a moment, surveying the foliage around him. With a last glance, he backs deeper into the greenery, vanishing from sight. A lingering frame captures the stillness of the hut, the final echo of a tumultuous past.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. QUEENS HOSPITAL - DAY

Paul leans forward, a sharp wave of pain striking him. He winces, holding his throbbing head.

PAUL

So he was jailed- because of you?

IWALANI

Those in power were furious. They demanded death. And of all things, I was with child.

His expression shifts, the disclosure hitting him.

PAUL
He didn't die- a child?

IWALANI
When I finally secured bail, they refused to let me see him. He was taken to a ship... and sent away.

Paul leans back, the truth crashing over him.

PAUL
Those records-

IWALANI
Were filed under an assumed name.

PAUL
What about this child?

IWALANI
It's Keoni. He's our son- ko'u keiki hanau.

Paul looks skyward, his heart heavy with revelations. He lets out a breath he had been holding.

PAUL
You were right- let the ways of Aloha guide you.

He takes a moment, his thoughts shifting from shock to a deep desire for connection.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I thought I'd lost everything. The sorrow we now carry- can we break the cycle?

HEALANI
We must... through love... there is strength.

They share a loving glance. Iwalani reaches across to hold Paul's hand.

IWALANI
I'm your step Tutu- it's time we weave our stories... together. Welcome to our 'Ohana, Paul!

Their eyes meet- a deep understanding passing between them- intertwining fates and now, a shared future.

EXT. KAILUA SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Paul stands near a basketball court as he hands a line-up card to a referee. KAILUA PANIOLOS and a HONOLULU squad do lay-up drills in the background. The bleachers are buzzing with the families of uniformed military personnel, locals, Hawaiians, and Japanese.

A POLICE CAR pulls up, engine humming until it falls silent. JACK steps out, eyes scanning the scene before settling on Paul.

JACK
Paul Sands-

Paul turns to acknowledge Jack, curiosity mixed with tension.

PAUL
Detective Burns- can't this wait?

Jack steps forward, glancing at the activity on the court, then back to Paul.

JACK
You'll want to read this.

Jack hands an envelope to him. Paul pulls out the formal letterhead, scanning the contents.

INSERT:

In official lettering-

OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

AUTOPSY REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF CORONER

ANATOMIC FINDINGS - DEATH DUE TO NATURAL CAUSES

WHITE SUBSTANCE ATTRIBUTED TO CRUSHED FLOWERS

FRANK KELLY, CORONER

BACK TO SCENE

Jack notices PANIOLLO lettering on a jersey- a hint of a smile. He motions for Paul to come closer.

JACK (CONT'D)
Your letter- the university
concur- those flowers were-

PAUL
Datura wrightii. Sacred Datura...
poison.

Jack meets Paul's gaze.

JACK
I've seen a lot in this line of
work. When I arrest someone, I'm
usually right. I was wrong about
you.

Paul raises an eyebrow.

JACK (CONT'D)
And you took down Otto Kuehn. No
easy feat.

Paul nods, a hint of recognition in his eyes.

PAUL
Maybe you're the reason why.

Jack studies Paul, a flicker of admiration under his guarded
demeanor.

JACK
National security prevents us-

PAUL
(interrupting)
Thanks for clearing his name... and
mine.

Jack's expression softens.

JACK
These are your islands now. Just
don't get any ideas- still not sure
I like you.

Paul chuckles, the tension easing.

JACK (CONT'D)
Don't you have a basketball game,
Coach?

PAUL

That I do.

JACK

Then go kick some Honolulu butt.

Jack tips his hat and turns to leave. Paul pockets the envelope as he watches him go, a moment of reflection giving way to determination. He looks toward the stands. HEALANI blows a kiss, MR. G and NAN wave as KENJI stands up and bows. Paul gestures toward the Kailua team.

PAUL

It's time!

As the players surround him, he closes his eyes for a moment, soaking it in.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Time to believe- in your team and
in yourself. All hands in!

(then)

One- Two- Three-

The team echos back with vigor.

TEAM

KAILUA!

As the players erupt with energy, Paul grins, basking in the spirit of community and family... his family!

WHITE TEXT OVER BLACK:

-OTTO KUEHN - Mugshot Photo

The "Spy of Kailua," Bernard Julius "Otto" Kuehn sent coded information to the Japanese until his arrest on December 8th, 1941.

-DETECTIVE JACK BURNS - Photo

John "Jack" Anthony Burns was with the Honolulu Police Department from 1934-45, becoming Captain in 1941. He was later to be elected Governor of Hawai'i three times.

FADE OUT

THE END