

Sands of Lanikai

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SANDS OF LANIKAI

FADE IN:

EXT: IOLANI PALACE, HONOLULU - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Golden spikes crown emerald fencing. ROYAL GUARDS perform a changing of the guard.

Birdsong. PALM trees shudder in the breeze. Waves crash against a distant cliff.

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

A silk drape snaps open in an upper window.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

Pikake blossoms. Polished koa wood. Crimson carpet. Gilded chairs.

The glow of Candelabras. King Kamehameha murals watch with stoic eyes.

WINDOW

QUEEN LILI'UOKALANI (50s) grips the drape, knuckles tight, staring beyond the glass.

In the reflection: ghostly images of protesters desecrating Hawaiian flags.

She releases the drape - an anchor falling.

BUTLER KAHALE (60s) appears beside her.

KAHALE  
(softly)  
Your Majesty, guests have arrived.

The queen hesitates.

QUEEN  
(anxious)  
Guests? Now?

KAHALE  
Iwalani. With a haole boy.

A flicker of concern. She smooths her holoku<sup>-</sup>.

QUEEN  
Let them enter.  
(then, quietly)  
The greatest of dangers are the  
ones we don't see.

The queen glides to her elevated throne. A guard opens the grand koa wood door.

IWALANI KAMAKAWIWO'OLE (20s) bursts in, radiant.

WILLIAM SANDS (20s) follows, nervous, scanning the room as if a threat hides in every corner.

KAHALE  
Miss Iwalani Kamakawiwo'ole and Mr.  
William Sands.

Iwalani kneels. William hovers, uneasy.

QUEEN  
Rise, 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?

William stiffens. His boot taps.

IWALANI  
Yes. William-

She beckons him forward.

IWALANI (CONT'D)  
He works at the shipyard. I was  
there for fish, but the rally  
started-

William swallows hard.

IWALANI (CONT'D)  
(lowering voice)  
I was taking notes. Then the  
Honolulu Rifles-

WILLIAM  
Iwalani... tell her why we're here.

A beat.

He glances toward the window - toward a world closing in.

IWALANI  
We're going to get-

QUEEN  
The rally? And the riflemen?

William cuts in, voice low, urgent.

WILLIAM  
I overheard them. While hiding...  
behind crates.  
(eyes darting)  
They plan to surround the palace.  
Before sundown!

A gull shrieks outside.

QUEEN  
Sundown... my people.

She clutches an armrest, studies William.

A distant drumbeat.

QUEEN (CONT'D)  
And you risked bringing this to me?

William trembles - but beneath it, a spark of conviction.

WILLIAM  
They're not here for peace. They  
want Hawaii... for themselves.

This lands. Hard.

EXT. IOLANI PALACE - DAY

U.S. MARINES march toward the palace. AMERICAN MILITIA follow, rifles ready.

The GUARDS flee to safety.

A BATTERING RAM smashes the gate. A GATLING GUN whirs into position.

INT. THRONE - DAY

CAPTAIN AKAMU (30s), grips his helmet, kneels before the queen, eyes darting back toward the door.

AKAMU

Your Majesty, the American haoles, should we notify-

QUEEN

No. No Hawaiian blood shed today.

She turns to Iwalani, fear beneath her resolve.

QUEEN (CONT'D)

Take the carriage. Before it's too late.

STAIRS

Guards rush Iwalani and William down a flight of royal stairs. A SENTRY (30s) waves them forward.

SENTRY

Hurry!

They slip out the back door.

INT. CARRIAGE - DAY

Iwalani trembles. William masks fear with determination.

IWALANI

What if they stop us?

She clings to him.

WILLIAM

(to himself)

I won't let anything happen to her.  
Not now. Not ever.

The door SLAMS shut.

EXT. CARRIAGE - DAY

The carriage bolts forward. WHEELS CREAK. They veer away from the palace.

MILITIA rush into position. GUNFIRE erupts. Bullets WHIZ through the air, ping off metal.

WILLIAM  
Get down!

He shields her. A bullet tears into her shoulder. Iwalani gasps, her body folds against him.

IWALANI  
(weak)  
I wanted aloha... for us.

WILLIAM  
Hold on! We'll make it!

The carriage bursts through the back gate.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
(to himself)  
I'm here, Iwalani... I won't fail you. I won't fail Hawaii.

A Hawaiian flag lowers in the distance.

EXT. SS LURLINE - O'AHU - DAY

The SS LURLINE glides through dark waves.

SUPERIMPOSE: NOVEMBER 5, 1941

WILLIAM SANDS (70s), grips a deck railing, still holding Iwalani, staring at Diamond Head.

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

PAUL SANDS (20s) approaches - tall, athletic, handsome but carrying grief.

PAUL  
That must be Diamond Head.

William brightens.

WILLIAM  
Memories.

PAUL  
You've been here before?

A long pause.

WILLIAM  
(softly)  
Miss your mom and dad, don't you.

Paul stiffens.

PAUL  
You think its easy? I'm here,  
aren't I?  
(then, quieter)  
I need answers, Grandpa.

William studies him, a decision forming.

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

Paul rolls his eyes.

PAUL  
All I hear is my heart breaking.

WILLIAM  
Learn to hear what isn't said...  
see what isn't seen.  
(beat)  
These are things your mom... my  
beautiful daughter-

William wipes a tear.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Never told you. Things I should  
have. Now - you must let the ways  
of Aloha guide you.

Paul looks at him, surprised.

PAUL  
Guide me-  
(then)  
Wait, what is that?

A submarine breeches the surface. Red disc. I-24 insignia.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Japanese? They're too close. This  
is a passenger route.

William's expression tightens.

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

He moves away, looks off into the distance.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
As promised, my heavenly seabird...  
together again.

He lingers, as if saying goodbye, then slips inside.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

William approaches a stateroom (bedroom). He hears a filtered word that freezes him.

"Navy."

He stops. Listens.

STATEROOM

ISAMU ANZAI (20s) - Japanese - sinewy, predatory - studies the ocean through a porthole.

OTTO KUEHN (40s) - German, tense - packs a suitcase.

ISAMU  
Tokyo expects results. Hawai'i will  
be ours... before the year ends.

Otto hesitates.

OTTO  
Germany needs intelligence, not  
war. We've poked the Soviet bear-  
(swallows hard)  
I didn't sign up for this.

Isamu steps closer.

ISAMU  
They will never accept you. But  
serve me... and you'll have glory.

Otto's eyes darken, jaw tightens.

OTTO  
I'm not your pawn.

Isamu pulls out a small POUCH. A vial of WHITE POWDER.

ISAMU  
If you're caught-

A CREAK of a floorboard. Isamu's head snaps toward the sound. He signals Otto - a practiced gesture.

ISAMU (CONT'D)  
Someone's listening

William's breath catches. He backs away.

WILLIAM  
(whispers)  
I can't let this go.

He runs.

CORRIDOR

William bolts down the hallway.

Isamu pursues - fast, disciplined. The pouch slips.

Powder explodes in the air.

EXT: SHIP DECK

William bursts out. Isamu follows, feral.

ISAMU  
You cannot run from this!

He attacks - precise, trained. Ruthless. William struggles.

A SICKLE SHAPED SCAR gleams on Isamu's hand.

The vial spills into William's mouth.

ISAMU (CONT'D)  
Now you die-

William collapses. His last breath carried by the wind.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The flash of a scarred hand. A body tumbles into the waves.

Paul sees it - horrified.

He straightens, scanning the deck. No alarms. No witnesses.

PAUL  
(whispers)  
That was a body.

He steadies himself, confusion hardening into suspicion.

EXT. HONOLULU PORT - DAY

The Lurline docks.

Crowds wave colorful leis, joy mixed with unease.

Paul frowns, the earlier jolt still weighing on him.

PAUL  
(to himself)  
All these flowers. Celebrating...  
or mourning?

Ramps are secured. Officials board. A large BANNER unfurls:

A-L-O-H-A.

Paul scans the crowd, brow furrowed.

A MARCHING BAND plays jubilant tunes.

Hula dancers sway. Hawaiian men dive into iridescent water.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
(uneasy)  
That sub was running dark... no  
flags, no signal. Why would they be  
here?

He turns, searching for William.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Gramps? Grandpa?

He pushes through the growing crowd. Some eye him with  
suspicion.

Nearby, Isamu and Otto's voices cut through the noise -  
sharp, conspiratorial.

ISAMU  
(low, controlled)  
Our contacts wait. When we deliver  
the Navy schedules, the rest  
begins.

Paul brushes past Otto. He bumps into Isamu - notices a faint chemical smell - sharp, pungent.

PAUL  
Sorry.

Isamu scowls. The crowd hushes.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
(assertive)  
Navy schedules? What are you  
planning?

ISAMU  
(cold)  
Walk away. This isn't your fight.

Paul steps forward, jaw set.

PAUL  
If you're putting innocent lives at  
risk, it is my fight.

Isamu's eyes harden - a warning. He steps back, but the threat lingers.

Paul observes the sickle-shaped scar. His eyes sharpen in recognition.

The crowd exhales.

The departure resumes.

EXT. LOCAL BEACH - DAY

HEALANI LUIS (20s) an exotic, lithe beauty, rides her horse along the surf - confident, connected to the land.

She surveys the coastline with a practiced eye - someone who knows every tide and current.

Healani slows.

Something drifts in the shallows. Unease tugs at her lip.

HEALANI  
(to herself)  
What is that?

She dismounts, approaches cautiously.

HEALANI (CONT'D)  
Clothing?

She leans in - freezes.

William Sands' lifeless body sways in the tide, pale against the blue water, eyes fixated on the sky.

A faint white residue clings to his mouth, dissolving in the wash.

HEALANI (CONT'D)  
Oh, my God...

She steadies herself, mounts quickly, and gallops off.

INT. HONOLULU POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

A bustling command station. Phones ring. Footsteps echo.

OFFICE

DETECTIVE JACK BURNS (30s) - sharp features, stubborn scowl.

He works at a cluttered desk. An unlit cigarette hangs from his mouth.

His desk phone rings.

JACK  
Burns here.  
(pause)  
When was this?

He stiffens, flicks the cigarette onto the desk.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Found where?

A memory flashes - a younger Jack almost drowns.

He shakes it off. Hangs up the phone.

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

He grabs a rain jacket.

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

With a kick to close an open drawer, Jack strides out.

EXT. LOCAL BEACH - DAY

Paniolos (Portuguese cowboys) inch forward toward the  
resting body.

Healani blocks them, raising a hand. Ocean air whips through  
her hair.

HEALANI  
(to herself)  
The ocean gives life... today it  
brings sorrow.

JACK approaches.

JACK  
Who is Healani?

HEALANI  
That is me.

Jack kneels, drops an evidence bag. The crunch of sand  
resonates.

He snaps on gloves.

JACK  
Anyone touch him?

HEALANI  
No. He deserves respect, even now.

Jack checks pockets - finds a WALLET and wet C-notes, a  
silver MONEY CLIP.

He flips open the wallet. A California I.D. spills forth.

INSERT: I.D. - WILLIAM SANDS

Jack exhales.

Rain begins to fall.

He hands Healani his jacket.

JACK  
Hold this over him.

Healani hesitates but complies.

Jack removes a scallop-edged PHOTOGRAPH, shakes it dry, bags it.

A stillness. Something is off.

He lifts William's lip - finds a white paste.

JACK (CONT'D)  
(realizing)  
Well, look at this.

Healani gasps.

HEALANI  
What does it mean? Why him? Why  
now?

Jack meets her gaze.

JACK  
We're about to find out.

INT. SHIP STATEROOM - NIGHT

DOCTOR PETERSON (60s) scribbles notes.

Paul sits, head in hands.

A wall clock ticks. Peterson leans in.

PETERSON  
I know this is difficult. It's been  
hours... is your grandfather  
nearby?

PAUL  
He's here. On the ship. We're from  
California. Hollywood.  
(frustrated)  
You've got to listen to me.

PETERSON  
Hollywood...? Film industry?

PAUL  
(shakes head)  
Shipping.

PETERSON  
And the draft?

Paul tenses.

PAUL  
I'm 4-F. Knees. Sixth man...  
Columbia.  
(then)  
Stop the questions. A body went  
over the side!

The door bursts open.

Jack and two burly POLICEMEN enter.

JACK  
Paul Sands. Detective Burns.  
Honolulu Police Department.

Paul stands, alarmed.

PAUL  
Where's my grandfather?

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

PAUL  
What do you mean?

The clock ticks louder.

JACK  
A formal inquiry has been opened  
into his death.

Paul reels.

JACK (CONT'D)  
We need to ask you some questions.

PAUL  
More questions. No... no. You're  
wrong. This can't-

He sways in place, as if absorbing a punch.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Give me a minute.

JACK  
We must go. Now.

The policemen escort him out.

INT. HONOLULU POLICE STATION - DAY

The clamor of typing. Jack leans on his desk, thinking.

FBI AGENT DAUGHTRY (30s) passes 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  
Chaos. The war in Europe feels like  
a picnic. D-C's talking internment.  
Germans, Italians and get this-

He glances around as if the walls have ears.

DAUGHTRY (CONT'D)  
Japanese. We have orders to follow  
up on it.

Jack bristles.

JACK  
As if you don't have enough to do.

DAUGHTRY  
That name you asked about - Otto  
Kuehn.

Jack waits.

DAUGHTRY (CONT'D)  
He's on the list.

Jack nods tersely.

DESK SERGEANT HONAN (40s) approaches with a folder, eyes darting.

HONAN

Got a moment?

JACK

Any update on the Sands work-up?

HONAN

(voice low)

Prelim report. Don't flip your wig.  
We can't hold him. He's being  
released.

Jack turns pages - disbelief, furious.

JACK

Inconclusive? Substance requires  
further testing? You've got to be-

He slams the folder.

JACK

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

Honan nods once. Jack stands firm. Daughtry watches,  
approving.

EXT. HONOLULU PORT - NIGHT

Spotlights sweep the harbor. Waves slap against the  
Lurline's hull.

Paul sits slumped on a weathered bench, drinking.

Paul sets the bottle down. It slides through his fingers  
with a hollow thud.

He pulls out a photograph, backside up.

ALL MY LOVE FOREVER, LANI

He pockets it, shifts in place.

He pulls out a SOUVENIR PASSENGER LIST.

He finds:

WILLIAM P. SANDS

PAUL

(to himself)

What else did you hide?

His eyes close.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. HONOLULU PORT - LURLINE - DAY

Isamu and Otto are on the deck.

Otto alarmed by the confrontation, Isamu cold.

BACK TO PRESENT

Paul sits up, scans the list again - finds:

BERNARD J. OTTO KUEHN

VOICES approach. Paul slips backs into the shadows.

He peers through the bench slats, breath caught in his throat.

Two STEWARDS approach the boarding ramp.

They leave the gate ajar, ascend the ramp and step onto the ship.

Paul watches them disappear.

PAUL  
(whispers)  
Something was missed. I will find  
the truth.

He rises, weaves over and slips through the gate.

EXT. SHIPYARD PARKING LOT - JACK - NIGHT

Jack sits in his POLICE CRUISER, watching.

Eyes narrow as he spots Paul boarding the ship.

JACK  
(quietly)  
Don't do this, Mr. Sands.

He starts the engine.

The police cruiser ROARS to life, lights flash across the lot.

Expression grim, Jack accelerates into the encroaching darkness.

INT. SHIP STATEROOM - NIGHT

Paul tries the door - locked.

He hesitates, breath tight, then KICKS IT IN. Splinters fly.

In the hallway: a broken vial, pouch, white powder on the floorboards.

Paul kneels, studying it. Sniffs the powder - recoils.

PAUL  
(under his breath)  
What the-  
(then)  
This isn't right.

Jack and CAPTAIN EDWARDS (50s) appear.

EDWARDS  
What the hell are you doing?

Paul rises, rattled but holding it together.

PAUL  
I thought... I thought I could find  
something. A reason. Something that  
made sense.

EDWARDS  
By breaking in? Brilliant.

Jack spots the contraband - sharp, efficient.

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

Paul realizes he is trapped. HANDCUFFS SNAP.

PAUL  
I wasn't hiding anything. I was  
trying to understand. Trying to  
make things right.

Jack tightens the handcuffs, unmoved.

JACK  
Good. So am I.

Jack leads Paul away.

INT. HONOLULU JAIL - DAY

Light slices through the cool brick corridor.

A PRISON GUARD walks with jangling skeleton keys.

MR. G (50s), a sprite Scotsman with a weathered gentleness, follows.

The guard stops to open a prison cell.

Paul paces, haunted.

He halts mid-stride to look up - stunned.

PAUL  
Mr. Gillespie?

MR. G  
Paul.

Paul stiffens, then breaks into a relieved embrace.

PAUL  
Mr. G!

MR. G  
Aye, lad. Far too long. What's it been... five, six years?

PAUL  
Last time on campus, right?

MR. G  
You've rolled into quite a spot o' trouble.

Paul's eyes drop - shame, guilt vs. innocence, grief.

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

Mr. G offers a reassuring smile.

MR. G  
It's just a bend in the road, ma pal. You'll figure it out.

A beat.

MR. G (CONT'D)  
Let's start by getting ye out of  
here.

Mr. G smiles. Paul blinks - hope flickering.

EXT. HONOLULU JAIL - DAY

Hawaiian sun beats down on the barb-wired compound.

Mr. G stands beside a 1941 HUDSON convertible, its smooth curves a reflection of his free-spirit.

Paul carries a battered suitcase, glancing back at the jail.

MR. G  
Poor fella. In the papers, too.  
Came as quick as I could.

Paul stares out at nothing.

PAUL  
I can't stop thinking about him.  
He's gone. Forever.  
(voice cracks)  
The body was his - I should get the  
hell out of here.

Mr. G softens.

MR. G  
Come along, laddie. Stay with Nan  
and me. Let the dust settle.

PAUL  
I never got to apologize. How did  
this happen?  
(then)  
I should've said I loved him.

MR. G  
Let's load up the car and be off  
with you.

Paul nods, barely holding himself together.

TIRES spin, pebbles spit, the car speeds away.

EXT. WINDWARD OAHU - KANEOHE RANCH - DAY

JORGE LUIS (30s) rides a spirited quarter horse across sun-drenched hills.

Cattle graze nearby.

He personifies the Paniolo life - rugged, passionate.

HEALANI follows, watchful.

The HUDSON approaches from distance.

Wind rustles through the tall grass.

Suddenly - ROARING JEEPS.

JORGE

Damn you! This ain't your road.

G.I.s tear past, laughter mingling with jeers, led by G.I. MORGAN (20s).

G.I. MORGAN

Hey, Joe! Look at the wannabe cowboy.

Jorge reins hard. The horse bucks beneath him.

JORGE

It's Jorge Goddamn Luis!

He swings off the horse, gripping the saddle.

A trailing jeep clips a fence post. Wood chips fly.

Jorge flashes an obscenity.

HEALANI

Jorge - let it go.

ISAMU rides up, cold confidence radiating off him.

He sneers at the departing caravan.

ISAMU

American devils. They'll choke on their arrogance.

Jorge spins, fists clenched.

JORGE  
You got something to say to me? I'm  
tired of your bullshit.

Before it escalates, the HUDSON rolls to a stop. Mr. G leans out - calm, steady.

MR. G  
Olá. Is everything all right?

Jorge's anger falters.

JORGE  
Mr. G...

Paul recognizes Isamu from the ship deck.

Steps out - locks eyes with him.

PAUL  
I've seen you before.

His attention is drawn to Healani.

Isamu notices. His expression tightens.

He whips out a knife and THROWS.

The blade THUDS into a fence post inches from Jorge.

HEALANI  
Enough! All of you!

Isamu smirks.

ISAMU  
Save yourself, haole.

JORGE trembles with rage.

JORGE  
(to Mr. G)  
We're fine. Everything's fine.

Mr. G senses the danger.

MR. G  
Paul. In the car.

Paul hesitates, eyes still on Healani - then obeys, reluctant.

The Hudson pulls away, tension lingering like smoke.

KANEOHE RANCH

Healani wheels her horse toward Isamu.

HEALANI

(defiant)

The answer is still no, Isamu. Stop following me.

Isamu's eyes narrow - a wolf sizing up his prey.

ISAMU

Choose your words carefully, ko'u aloha. Destiny doesn't wait for fools.

He kicks his mount and disappears over the ridge.

Jorge watches, jaw tight.

JORGE

We aren't fools.

Their shared history swirls like dust in the wind.

EXT./INT. PALI HIGHWAY - DAY

The HUDSON crests the PALI.

Mr. G pulls over as ARMY TRUCKS thunder past, reminders of a world in turmoil.

Paul watches them fade around a bend.

MR. G

You've had a run of it, haven't you, lad? First your parents... now this.

Paul's voice is barely a whisper.

PAUL

I keep wondering if I could've changed anything.

Mr. G steps out, breathing in the splendor of the Nu'uanau 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.

Paul gets out.

PAUL  
I don't know, Mr. G.-

He glances back at Mr. G's reassuring smile.

MR. G  
Come along... trust me. Let it  
speak to you.

Paul hesitates - then follows.

EXT. PALI LOOKOUT - DAY - LATER

PAUL and MR. G walk along a short, rugged stone wall.

The ravine yawns below - vast, ancient, alive.

MR. G  
It won't erase your troubles, but  
it reminds you that beauty endures.

Paul takes it in - the wind rising around him.

MR. G (CONT'D)  
Kamehameha the Great stood here.  
Fought for his people. For their  
future.

Something shifts in Paul - a spark, a kinship.

The wind swirls. His eyes close-

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. SHIPYARD - WILCOX RALLY - DAY

A bustling harbor - a fish market.

Crowds. Banners. Shouts for reform.

SUPERIMPOSE: "WILCOX RALLY, MAY 1892"

Young WILLIAM pushes through the throng.

IWALANI writes notes, fierce and focused.

CHARISMATIC ROBERT WILCOX (30s), in an ITALIAN MILITARY UNIFORM, rallies the people - powerful, charismatic.

The crowd chants, "No more tyranny!"

A military WAGON thunders into view.

HONOLULU RIFLES spill out, advancing toward them.

CLARENCE ASHFORD (40s), a hard-edged man on horseback, brandishes a RIFLE at Robert.

CLARENCE  
Arrest that man!

The crowd stiffens. GUNFIRE cracks. Havoc erupts.

William catches Iwalani's arm.

He feels her tremble, sees her resolve harden.

WILLIAM  
Run!

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

Iwalani stands firm, defiant.

IWALANI  
We can't let them do this!

Two riflemen advance. One lunges, grabs her arm, pulls her away.

She struggles, breaks free.

WILLIAM  
(shouting)  
I'll hold them off!

Their eyes meet... she sprints away.

William fights - is overwhelmed - collapses.

The butt of a RIFLE descends.

Darkness.

BACK TO PRESENT

EXT. PALI LOOKOUT - DAY

Paul staggers back, shaken.

PAUL  
What the hell was that?

Mr. G smiles gently.

MR. G  
The Kama'aina say the mountains  
sing to those who must hear them.

Paul studies him - unsure, unsettled.

PAUL  
Were they echos... or secrets?

Mr. G smiles warmly, sensing the confusion within Paul.

MR. G  
Perhaps both.

He gestures across the landscape.

MR. G (CONT'D)  
All Castle property. Kaneohe  
Ranch... largest on the island. And  
there - Kailua. "Two Waters."  
Balance, lad. That's the trick to  
life.

Paul pulls out the faded photo and money clip.

PAUL  
These were with him. The photo is  
ancient. Who are these women?

Mr. G examines them, holding up the photograph.

Two women. elegant, the oldest with a jeweled BUTTERFLY  
HAIRPIN.

He hands them back.

MR. G  
Sorry, Paul. I don't know these  
wahine.

A beat - something unspoken between them.

MR. G (CONT'D)

Come on. I can smell supper from here. Clear your mind a bit.

They head back toward the car.

The Pali wind whispers goodbye.

EXT. LANIKAI ROAD - DAY

The Hudson winds down a narrow coastal road.

Golden light glints off the ocean.

Paul studies the photo again - the butterfly hairpin, the faces, the age of it.

He's not grieving, he's thinking.

PAUL

(quiet, to himself)

Why would he have this...?

Mr. G glances over, reading him.

MR. G

Whatever you're puzzling over,  
lad... don't let it swallow you  
whole.

Paul doesn't answer, but his eyes reveal - he's forming a theory.

EXT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - DAY

Sunset. Emerging stars twinkle in the sky.

A modest home beneath ironwood trees.

Warm light spills from the windows.

Mr. G parks. Paul steps out, suitcase in hand, taking in the quiet.

MR. G

Nan will be thrilled. Just... mind  
the cat. She hates everyone.

Paul almost smiles.

INT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

NAN GILLESPIE (50s) - Scottish, sharp-eyed and warm, yin to Mr. G's unabashed yang, opens the door.

NAN

Paul Sands! Look at you - a sight for sore eyes.

She pulls him into a hug before he can protest.

PAUL

It's good to see you, Nan.

NAN

You look like you haven't slept for a week. Sit. Eat. Then we talk.

Paul sits at a kitchen table.

Nan sets down a plate of food, pours a glass full from a pitcher.

Mr. G watches Paul closely.

MR. G

Tell us what you're thinking.

Paul nods - slowly, deliberately.

PAUL

I don't know... but I'm done pretending it was an accident.

Mr. G looks at Nan. They sense the moment.

Paul is going to investigate.

GILLESPIE HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - LATER

Paul sits alone in a guest room.

Moonlight spills over the bed.

He studies the photo again - the butterfly hairpin shimmers in the lunar light.

He notices a faint watermark: "K.L - 1892"

Paul's breath catches.

PAUL  
(whispers)  
Kailua... what was that queen's  
name?  
(then)  
Lili'uokalani...?

He's not sure - but the thought triggers.

Paul pulls out a notebook and begins writing:

Grandpa's last movements? The powder? The photo?

The rally vision? Isamu recognizing him?

Why Jorge reacted to Mr. G?

He circles one word: WHY?

Paul is no longer drifting.

He's hunting.

EXT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - SAME TIME

Outside, near the ironwoods, a SHADOW watches the house.

A cigarette ember glows.

The figure stands just beyond beyond the treeline - unseen  
by Paul.

The ember drops. A boot crushes it.

The figure slips away into the black.

INT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Paul closes the notebook, exhausted but focused.

He lies back, staring at the ceiling.

The wind outside rises - a low, distant hum.

Paul's eyes drift shut...

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. HONOLULU - NIGHT

A lantern-lit street. Rain on cobblestones.

William slides through the shadows.

He clutches rifles to his chest.

Footsteps behind him. Shadowed FIGURES following.

William turns a corner, disappears into darkness.

BACK TO PRESENT

PAUL'S ROOM

Paul jolts awake - sweating, heart pounding.

He sits up, breathing hard. He looks at the photo again.

This time he sees it differently.

Not as a relic. As a clue.

EXT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - DAY

Soft light creeps over the ironwoods. Birdsong filters through the stillness.

Paul steps out onto the porch, notebook in hand.

He looks tired but focused - a man with a purpose now.

He scans the yard. Something catches his eye:

Faint footprints in the damp soil near the treeline.

He crouches, studying them.

Not Mr. G's boots. Not Nan's slippers.

Someone was watching the home.

Paul's jaw tightens - not fear. Resolve.

INT. GILLESPIE KITCHEN - DAY

Nan flips pancakes with military precision.

Mr. G reads the paper, glasses low on his nose.

Paul enters, still thinking.

MR. G  
You look like you fought the  
mattress and lost.

Paul sits, distracted.

NAN  
You're up early.

PAUL  
Couldn't sleep.  
(then)  
Someone was outside last night.

Nan freezes mid-flip.

NAN  
Outside... here?

PAUL  
Footprints. Fresh.

Mr. G lowers the paper - concerned but not surprised.

MR. G  
You sure?

PAUL  
Positive.

Nan sets the pan down, suddenly protective.

NAN  
If someone's following you-

PAUL  
They're not following me. They're  
following whatever gramps got mixed  
up in.

This hits.

Mr. G and Nan nod in approval.

EXT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - LATER

Mr. G loads tools into the Hudson.

MR. G

We'll head to the ranch. Jorge  
should know if anyone is snooping  
around these parts.

PAUL

You mean the cowboy... and the  
girl?

MR. G

Healani.

Paul nods, but he's thinking ahead.

PAUL

She knew that guy. He was on the  
ship. Same deck. He recognized me -  
or thought he did.

Mr. G pauses - a thought, something unreadable.

MR. G

Aye. Sharp as a tack, she is. Just  
mind yourself with that Isamu.

(then)

That lad's temper runs hotter than  
the Pali wind.

Paul climbs into the car, determination settling in.

EXT. KANEOHE RANCH - DAY

The HUDSON rolls up the dirt road toward a barn.

Jorge is outside repairing a fence post.

A knife is embedded in the wood.

He yanks it free - hard - as Paul and Mr. G approach.

JORGE

Bom dia.

He eyes Paul - not hostile but wary. Mr. G nods.

PAUL

Someone was outside the house last  
night. Watching.

Jorge's expression darkens.

JORGE  
Ya' sure?

PAUL  
Yeah.

Jorge glances toward the hills.

JORGE  
Could be him.  
(inspects knife)  
Could be someone worse.

Paul steps closer, lowering his voice.

PAUL  
What's his problem with me?

Jorge hesitates, then looks him in the eye.

JORGE  
Isamu hates outsiders - and he  
hates anyone showin' interest in  
Healani.

Paul absorbs that.

PAUL  
So he's jealous.

JORGE  
Jealous. Dangerous. Tied up with  
things you don't wanna know about.

PAUL  
But I need to know. Whatever my  
grandpa got tangled in... it didn't  
end on the ship.

Jorge studies him - sees the resolve.

JORGE  
Then you'd better talk to Healani.  
She's down by the paddocks.

He points toward the far pasture. Paul nods and heads off.

Mr. G watches him go - thoughtful, worried.

He glances at Jorge - who shakes his head.

EXT. PASTURE - CONTINUOUS

Healani stands beside a horse, brushing its coat.

She looks up as Paul approaches.

Not surprised, not afraid - defiant, guarded, yet curious.

HEALANI  
You're back.

PAUL  
I need your help.

She analyzes him - sees the shift in him.

HEALANI  
Yesterday, you made things  
worse. Today, you seek help.  
Chasing ghosts?

PAUL  
Maybe.

He holds up the photo - her eyes widening.

Recognition, but she hides it well.

She swings up onto her horse.

HEALANI  
You're stepping into something old.  
Older than you think.

PAUL  
Then share with me what you know.

Healani exhales - slow, controlled.

HEALANI  
Not now. And certainly not with  
you.

Healani snaps the reins and rides off.

Paul watches her leave - stunned by the rejection - and the weight of her warning.

EXT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - DAY

Paul stands on the porch, notebook in hand.

He stairs at the footprints again.

Mr. G steps out, large hat in hand.

M.R. G  
You look like you've been up all  
night again.

PAUL  
I have.

Mr. G evaluates him. A flicker of concern, quickly masked.

MR. G  
Then keep your wits about you. But  
for now...  
(smiles)  
Nan insists you take a break before  
you drive yourself mad.

Paul exhales - tension simmering.

Mr. G claps him on the shoulder.

MR. G (CONT'D)  
Go for a swim, lad. Clear your  
head. Relax. You'll need it for  
whatever comes next.

Paul nods reluctantly - heads toward the beach.

EXT. - GILLESPIE HOUSE - DAY

Paul returns from a swim, hair dripping.

He scans the yard, its border trimmed by a riot of flowers.

Mr. G and KENJI FUJIMOTO (40s) work in the garden, their  
broad hats shading sweat-stained clothes.

MR. G  
Hope you didn't miss breakfast,  
laddie. Nan was ready to send out a  
search party.

Paul's gaze drifts to Kenji - precise, gentle, almost  
reverent with the plants.

MR. G (CONT'D)  
Kenji - come meet Paul Sands.

Kenji approaches with a quiet grace, bowing slightly.

Paul offers a hand. Kenji shakes it with gloved fingers.

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

KENJI  
Coffee grounds-  
(sparkle in his eye)  
Missus say it's magic.

Paul smiles faintly, but his mind is elsewhere.

PAUL  
Gramps said life is like a  
garden... that it needs constant  
care.  
(scoffs)  
That detective wouldn't know a  
flower from a weed.

Mr. G exchanges a glance with Kenji - something unspoken -  
then dismisses him with a nod.

MR. G  
Thanks, my friend.

Kenji bows and returns to trimming.

Mr. G pulls Paul aside, tone shifting.

MR. G (CONT'D)  
Remember, beauty can bloom even in  
the toughest of soil.

Paul's frustration simmers.

PAUL  
Doesn't change the fact no  
one's listening. That powder was  
sweet... then it turned nasty. A  
real headache.

MR. G  
Trust me, lad. I had a run-in with  
the the H-P-D once. You lose their  
ear, it's a long way back.

Paul's softens, but the tension remains.

MR. G (CONT'D)  
C'mon. Nan has something for you.

Paul grabs his shirt from the railing.

As he heads inside, he lingers.

PAUL  
Maybe it's time I made my own  
garden.

A wave crashes. Seagulls cry. Something dark is coming.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

A small skiff cuts across the water. OTTO pilots, scanning the horizon, nerves etched on his face.

A rubber raft approaches - ISAMU paddling with hard-eyed precision.

OTTO  
Guten Tag.

ISAMU  
Konnichiwa.  
(then)  
We speak English.

Otto checks his watch, panic rising.

OTTO  
It's taking too long. Every second is a warning. What if they miss the window?

Isamu's eyes narrow - assessing, calculating.

ISAMU  
Focus. The codes have changed. We need updates - now.

He tosses a satchel into the skiff.

Otto catches it, frustration boiling.

OTTO  
Again? We just changed them! This operation is a mess. What if they catch on?

Isamu's glare is lethal.

ISAMU  
Are you questioning my orders?

Otto freezes.

OTTO  
No I... Ich verstehe.

ISAMU  
No mistakes. Your life depends on  
it. The goal is clear - Hawaii.  
Don't stand in my way.

Otto swallows hard.

OTTO  
Glory to the fatherlands.

ISAMU  
I remain undercover.

Isamu paddles away, swallowed by the horizon.

Otto stares into the deep water - shaken.

INT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - DAY

Nan's kitchen is immaculate, warm, inviting.

She greets Paul with a gentle smile.

NAN  
You look relaxed today. Is the room  
treating you well?

PAUL  
Bed's a little short.

Nan chuckles, but her eyes search him - sensing the weight  
he carries.

MR. G  
Show her what you showed me.

Paul slides the PHOTO and MONEY CLIP across the table.

NAN  
She's beautiful.

She examines the clip - something sparkles in her  
expression.

NAN (CONT'D)  
You should take this to Kailua  
Town. The jeweler might help you.

Paul exhales - overwhelmed.

PAUL  
I can't shake the feeling time is  
running out. If I don't figure this  
out... I might lose everything.

Nan squeezes his hand.

NAN  
Then follow where it leads.

Mr. G claps his hands.

MR. G  
Later. First - a little adventure.  
You and are going to the horse  
races!

Paul blinks.

PAUL  
Horse races?

Nan rolls her eyes.

NAN  
Just don't let him bet the house!

The moment lightens as they share a laugh.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

A sedan grinds to a stop in a dusty overflow lot, tires crackling underneath.

It settles between two trucks. The engine dies.

OTTO steps out, camera slung with purpose.

His eyes sweep the area - not sightseeing, surveying.  
Calculating. Reporting.

He mutters to himself. Low, clipped.

OTTO  
(under his breath)  
Orders are orders. They want  
pictures, I take pictures.

He moves with quiet precision, pauses at a truck's headlight.

In the chrome reflection, he studies the crowd - faces, uniforms, patterns.

He lifts the camera. Click. Another angle. Click.

Each shot, deliberate. Reconnaissance.

EXT. KAILUA RACE TRACK ENTRY - CONTINUOUS

Across the way, a vibrant line of race-goers snakes toward the entrance.

Bright outfits pop against the lush greenery.

Mr. G hustles forward, glancing back at PAUL, who trails a few paces behind - steady, alert.

Looking for clues.

MR. G  
You go ahead, I'll catch up.

Mr. G approaches a wiry man in an over-sized hat.

The man's hands tremble, bills fluttering like trapped moths.

A discreet exchange - cash for a sliver of paper.

Paul notes it. Files it. Nothing is casual anymore.

Mr. G returns, grinning.

PAUL  
A winner... or a dreamer?

MR. G  
Just you wait. Jorge Luis rides  
Paniolo Pleasure. Best horseman in  
these parts.

The crowd noise swells - cheers, chatter, the hum of anticipation.

Paul scans the perimeter, instinct tugging him toward...

OTTO.

Across the lot, Otto snaps photos with surgical precision.

Not of horses. Not of friends - Infrastructure. Entrances. Security... Click.

Paul stiffens, the memory of a jail door closing.

EXT. KAILUA RACE TRACK INFIELD - DAY

Paul and Mr. G lean against the infield barrier.

The crowd buzzes with nervous energy.

Paul's attention is elsewhere - scanning the packed grandstand, exits, behavior.

Riders parade their horses in a paddock.

Jorge leads Paniolo Pleasure, waving at the excited patrons.

Paul watches him, but more so, who's watching him.

TRACK ANNOUNCER  
Last call for the Kailua Stakes.  
Last call!

Behind them, Jack approaches with stealthy confidence.

A firm hand clamps onto Mr. G's shoulder.

JACK  
Never one to miss out on a little  
action, eh.

Mr. G jumps, then laughs as he turns.

MR. G  
Well if it ain't Jack Burns!  
Knocked ten years off a' me.

JACK  
Betting on the sweepstakes?

MR. G  
Just thinking-  
(to Paul)  
What's your take?

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

PAUL  
You think a horse race matters  
right now?

Mr. G sighs, trying to lighten the mood.

MR. G

What's life without a bit of fun?

Paul's jaw tightens. He's not here for fun.

M.R. G (CONT'D)

(to Jack, covering)

Sorry. We're a bit on edge. Paul's  
digging into questions about his  
grandfather.

Jack's expression shifts - professional, guarded.

JACK

The autopsy will tell us what we  
need to know.

MR. G

How long might that take?

JACK

Could be a few more days-

PAUL

(interrupting, low)

Stop the charade. Just arrest me.  
That's why you're here.

JACK

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

Paul moves but Mr. G blocks him, eyes sharp with warning.

MR. G

Easy. Just trying to understand  
what happened.

(to Jack)

Did you know his grandfather had a  
history here on O'ahu?

JACK

Can't say that I did.

MR. G

Any chance you could dig up some  
records for an ol' Scotsman?

Jack hesitates, then nods.

JACK

For you, I'll see what I can find.

His gaze drifts past them - toward OTTO. Jack's eyes narrow.

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

MR. G  
Otto Kuehn. Odd sort, if you ask  
me.

Paul watches Otto, too.

This time with suspicion... and something colder.

Jack gives Mr. G a respectful nod.

JACK  
Catch you later, Mr. G.  
(then)  
And... good luck with Jorge.

Jack melts into the crowd, leaving a tension that doesn't fade.

#### KAILUA RACE TRACK - LATER

Horses and riders line up at the Start Line.

Jorge and Paniolo Pleasure stand poised, focused.

A hush falls. A single hoof paws the dirt.

#### STARTING LINE

A START GUN cracks.

They're off - Paniolo Pleasure is squeezed against the rail.

The leaders surge ahead.

Mr. G deflates, then glances at Paul who barely reacts.

His attention keeps drifting - toward Otto, toward the stands, toward anything that doesn't fit.

#### BACKSTRETCH

The pack thunders into the turn. Jorge fights for position.

Thundering hooves create mayhem - filling the air with dirt and noise.

Flashbulbs explode. The crowd roars.

To Paul, it's overpowering - noise, motion, chaos.  
He searches for patterns in the frenzy.

TRACK ANNOUNCER  
(filtered)  
It's a blanket finish!

The crowd holds its breath.

TRACK ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)  
(filtered)  
Paniolo Pleasure - winner by a  
nose!

The infield erupts. Hats fly. Mr. G dances a jubilant jig.

Paul barely registers it.

Healani glides toward Jorge, radiant.

Paul focuses on her - drawn in, but wary.

She drapes a lei over Jorge's shoulders. They embrace.

Their warmth contrasts sharply with Paul's intensity.

Revelers surge around him, blocking his view, isolating him.

He stands alone.

Caught between hope and dread - between the noise of the present and the shadows of the past.

The past he now chases.

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

The Hudson glides along the coastline.

Paul drives, brow furrowed - still thinking.

Mr. G leans out, letting the wind whip through his hair.

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

A weathered stone pillar flashes by:

LANIKAI

The road curves inland.

A BURMA-SHAVE sign passes.

Then:

WELCOME TO KAILUA TOWN

Military vehicles line the street near a TAVERN.

Paul tenses.

PAUL

You think the military is here for  
a reason?

MR. G

Beer.

(laughs)

They're thirsty.

Paul's eyes drift to a small building draped in foliage.

A JEWELER signboard flickers out.

Mr. G notices.

MR. G

If you're gonna find answers,  
better hurry.

Paul parks. Mr. G catches the keys effortlessly.

MR. G (CONT'D)

I'll meet you at the bar.

Thunder rumbles overhead.

A JAPANESE FLAG flutters ominously in the far distance.

A storm is coming.

INT. JEWELER - DAY

A door strap jingles.

Paul bursts in.

The warm light bounces off glass showcases.

PAUL

Still open?

WATANABE (60s) looks up - calm, dignified.

WATANABE  
For a moment longer.

Paul slides the money clip across the counter.

PAUL  
Can you read the inscription?

Watanabe polishes it, revealing its shine.

WATANABE  
Sterling silver. Nineteenth  
century. Only the royal palace  
could afford this.

He peers through an eyepiece.

WATANABE (CONT'D)  
I-W-A-L-A-N-I. Iwalani.

PAUL  
Iwalani... Lani... royal palace...

Paul shows the photo. Watanabe's eyes widen.

WATANABE  
The diamond butterfly, worn by a  
great woman - the queen. To be in  
picture? Special friend.

Paul absorbs this, shaken - he was right.

PAUL  
I was hoping for answers...

Watanabe places a reassuring hand on the counter.

WATANABE  
Sometimes the past waits for us.  
You're only at the beginning.

Paul straightens. The revelation sinks in.

INT. KAILUA TAVERN - NIGHT

The roadhouse is alive - music, laughter, uniforms.

Mr. G spots JORGE across the room, motions for Paul to follow.

JORGE  
Mr. G! Over here!

They push through the crowd. JORGE hugs Mr. G.

MR. G  
You were magnificent today, mi  
amigo!

JORGE  
Not bad for a Portugee, huh?

Mr. G gestures toward Paul.

MR. G  
I never introduced you two... Paul  
Sands. Hollywood's finest!

Jorge claps Paul on the back.

JORGE  
Hollywood! Drinks on me.

Mr. G leans in.

MR. G  
Missus wants me sober tonight.

PAUL  
You sure?

MR. G  
You'll be fine.

Mr. G waves a farewell, slips away.

Paul and Jorge toast - camaraderie forming.

A drunken SAILOR - CHASE (20s) - stumbles over.

CHASE  
(slurring)  
Think you're better than us,  
Paniolo? Look at you, all hugs and  
laughs.

Jorge stands to take a swing - misses - hits an Army  
sergeant.

All hell breaks loose.

Paul ducks a punch, counters with a clean uppercut.

PAUL  
Don't start what you can't finish!

The brawl explodes. Tables flip. Bodies fly. Glass shatters.  
Jorge is struck with a bottle. Paul grabs him.

PAUL  
Come on!

They stagger outside.

EXT: TAVERN PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Jorge wipes blood from his head.

JORGE  
Ain't this just the bees knees.  
Welcome to Hawaii, Hollywood.

They stumble into the street, bruised yet standing.

PAUL  
Feels like fight night.

JORGE  
Damn dogfaces.

A pickup skids to a stop. HEALANI jumps out, furious.

HEALANI  
Are you out of your mind, Jorge?

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

She blocks him from climbing in.

HEALANI  
Get in. Now.

PAUL  
Little sis?

Healani slams the door shut behind Jorge.

She turns to Paul - cold, assessing.

HEALANI  
Stay close, he's trouble.

Jorge sheepish, grimaces.

She swings up into the truck. Drives off.

Paul watches the taillights fade, regret settling in.

EXT. LANIKAI BAY - DAY

PAUL swims - trying to clear his head.

Aircraft roar overhead. P-40 FIGHTERS.

He spots Healani swimming nearby.

Paul draws closer.

PAUL  
I wanted to say I'm sorry. I'm  
Paul... Paul Sands.

She keeps her distance.

HEALANI  
Right. Whatever.

A large shadow moves beneath them. Her face drains.

HEALANI (CONT'D)  
Shark. Stay calm.

Paul thinks she's joking - until he sees the TIGER SHARK.

PAUL  
Go!

He shoves her toward the shore, kicking hard.

HEALANI  
It's coming!

The shark lunges - Paul strikes it, redirecting its charge.

They burst onto the sand, gasping.

HEALANI  
We need to warn everyone. It's a  
tiger!

She sprints up the beach. Paul follows, limping.

HEALANI (CONT'D)  
Head up the beach. Tell the locals.  
I'll get the fishermen.

She turns back - softer now.

HEALANI (CONT'D)  
What you did... that was brave. I  
wouldn't have thought-

She stops herself.

HEALANI (CONT'D)  
Thank you. I'm Healani.

Paul smiles, knowingly.

PAUL  
Nice to meet you, Healani.

A connection stirs - fragile, real.

EXT. BAY HOMES - DAY

A row of small hillside cottages lines a quiet, sandy street.

Paul jogs unevenly up from the shoreline, breath still short from the shark encounter.

PAUL  
(shouting)  
There's a shark in the bay!

A HAWAIIAN FAMILY spills out of a nearby cottage.

Kids chase each other, laughing, cupped hands reaching up as if Paul was Santa with candy.

Paul gently waves them back, eyes on the adults.

A tall hapa man, KEONI KAMAKAWIWO'OLE (50s) watches him with a steady, assessing calm.

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

A soft poke at his ribs. Paul looks down.

IWALANI KAMAKAWIWO'OLE (70s) stands before him - poised, eyes deep as tide pools.

IWALANI  
You have no fear, young one. I see  
the koa of a warrior... fierce  
strength. But even warriors must  
respect the sea.

PAUL  
I'm just trying to warn everyone.

She places a hand over his heart - gentle, deliberate.

IWALANI  
A warning is only as strong as the  
heart behind it. Bravery is knowing  
when to place your trust.

She leans closer, voice dropping to a secretive hush.

IWALANI (CONT'D)  
Long ago, a fisherman feared the  
ocean. One day he learned his power  
wasn't in his hands... but in here.  
(taps his chest)  
That day, he caught the biggest  
fish he had ever seen.

Paul ponders this - unsettled, intrigued.

PAUL  
(softly)  
Are you... Lani?

Her smile falters.

A glint of recognition - or warning - crosses her eyes.

She withdraws, ushering the children back to the cottage.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Iwalani...

She pauses, glances back - a brief, knowing look - then  
disappears around the corner.

PAUL {CONT'D}  
(to himself)  
Strength from in here...

A distant shout snaps him back.

He turns toward the sandy road, resolve hardening.

EXT. BAY HOMES - OTTO'S COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Paul walks on, glancing toward Mokapu where distant aircraft  
descend in the distance.

A second-story door of a seaside cottage opens.

OTTO steps out, binoculars in hand.

Paul ducks behind a bush, watching.

STAIRS

OTTO scans the ocean with precision.

He hangs the field glasses on a peg, descends the steps quietly.

He moves to a clothesline - uneven sheets flapping like signals.

Otto adjusts them with meticulous care.

From brush, ISAMU emerges - silent, controlled.

A single nod passes between them. No words. Just intent.

Otto retreats up the stairs, picks up the binoculars, slips inside.

ROAD

Isamu strides down the street.

He glances back - eyes narrowing as he spots Paul rising from behind the bush.

Paul follows at a distance.

Isamu joins a small group of LOCAL MEN - their laughter masking something sharper beneath.

Paul leans forward to listen.

A sinister blade presses against his chest.

ISAMU  
(low, deadly)  
What do haole say? Curiosity kills  
the cat.

Paul raises his hands, stepping back.

PAUL  
Don't threaten me.

Isamu moves closer, brandishing the knife.

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

Paul glances at the locals - silent, watchful, loyal to Isamu.

He steadies himself.

PAUL  
(defiant)  
The hell she is. Who are they?

Isamu lunges - a swift, practiced strike. Paul twists away, the blade slicing a clean gash through his shirt.

ISAMU  
(snarling)  
Haole deaf? Leave, or die!

Paul scrambles back, anger simmering.

PAUL  
You were there. On F Deck. With the  
German. What happened to my  
grandfather?

Isamu freezes - a flash of recognition, then fury.

He sheaths the knife with a sharp motion.

ISAMU  
You are nothing.

He turns away.

The gang falls in behind him, shadows stretching across the sand as they disappear.

Paul stands tall. Shirt torn, breath short, pulse racing.

His eyes sharpen.

He's closing in on something.... something dangerous.

EXT. KAILUA BAY - DAY

Paul strides down a sloping path toward a cluster of fishermen.

They stand rigid, eyes darting across the water.

The men nod to HEALANI, who commands the moment with quiet authority.

They scramble for gear and board moored boats with an experienced speed.

A truck skids to a stop above them.

JORGE jumps out, slamming the door, storming downhill.

Healani turns at the commotion, worry etched across her face.

She spots Paul approaching.

PAUL

Jorge... didn't expect you out here.

Jorge waves him off - sharp, protective, on edge.

JORGE

This has nothin' to do with you, Hollywood. Just stay out of it.

PAUL

Out of what, exactly?

Before Jorge can answer, Healani steps between them.

HEALANI

Enough. You can go.

JORGE

Go? There's a shark in the bay!

Healani's eyes drift to Paul's torn shirt.

She reaches for it - stops, pulls back.

HEALANI

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

JORGE

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

HEALANI

I'm not a doll. You can't protect me like I'm porcelain.

JORGE  
Healani-

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

Jorge deflates - frustrated, conflicted. He turns uphill.

JORGE  
Helpful, huh? Then be at our ranch  
house at nine A.M.-  
(then)  
Hope a movie star can ride a horse.

He slams the truck door and drives off.

Paul watches him go, turns to Healani.

PAUL  
He's just looking out for you.

HEALANI  
(staring at the water)  
And I'm grateful. But I need to do  
this on my own.

A distant siren echos along the beach.

Healani straightens - resolve returning.

HEALANI (CONT'D)  
Let's go.

They hurry toward the sound - something shifting between  
them.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

Warm sunlight spills across a sprawling ranch.

Horses whinny in the distance.

Paul walks the private entry road taking in the serenity -  
but unease shadows his eyes.

A Navy jeep is parked near the main house.

Jorge appears in the doorway of the smaller dwelling, arms  
crossed, smirk ready.

JORGE

Wonders never cease. Our hero's  
even on time. Too bad I don't have  
a white horse.

He tosses Paul a weathered cowboy hat.

JORGE (CONT'D)

It'll block the sun.

Paul catches it, grinning despite himself.

He settles it on his head.

PAUL

Better than swimming with sharks,  
right?

JORGE

(playful)

Don't count your money before the  
horses run.

Jorge angles off. Healani approaches, leading two horses.

A cowgirl hat hangs from her neck - confident, effortless.

HEALANI

Here you go.

Their fingers brush as she hands him the reins - a spark  
neither acknowledges aloud.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

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

She mounts her filly with fluid grace.

Paul swings into his saddle, adjusting the hat - courage  
settling in.

Jorge rides up with another horse, tying it to Paul's.

JORGE

We'll take the beach road across  
the Kawai Nui. Watch the dips, they  
sneak up on you. I'll take my colt  
to Kailua. You two drop these  
horses off, hitch a ride back.

He mounts again, giving Paul a loaded side-glance.

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

PAUL  
Just try to stay in front of me.

They break into a trot, silhouettes fading into the bright horizon.

EXT. SEASIDE ROAD - DAY

The trio rides along a rugged dirt path. Plumeria bloom. The ocean glitters.

Jorge maneuvers closer to Paul.

JORGE  
Kailua and Lanikai are changin',  
Hollywood. They're talking about a  
hotel on the beach... makes me  
sick.

Jorge gestures toward MOKAPU, where navy planes roar overhead.

JORGE (CONT'D)  
And the military snatched our best  
grazing land. I've watched the  
future disappear, piece by piece.

They reach a bridge and slow.

Jorge lifts binoculars - stiffens.

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

He kicks his ride into a sprint, dust swirling behind him.

JORGE (CONT'D)  
Haw!

Jorge disappears down the trail, a whirlwind in his wake.

Healani and Paul's horses twitch, eager.

They move into a brisk trot.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Healani and Paul weave through rich foliage, a fluted spine of the Ko'olau range towering above.

The trail dips, revealing a bustling MILITARY BASE below.

HEALANI  
Kaneohe Naval Station.

Ground drills. PBY CATALINA planes taxi across a runway.

HEALANI (CONT'D)  
They're busy. Jorge thinks it's a big operation. Our navy tenants are rarely home - but when they are, they're loud.

PAUL  
I thought he hated the military.

HEALANI  
Business is business. But grazing rights? That's personal. The Castles have a thousand head. Jorge would fight tooth and nail for them.

Paul's eyes look to the horizon - troubled.

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

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

His face tightens.

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

HEALANI  
Will you have a service?

PAUL  
Tomorrow. I can't believe it.

Healani hesitates - something unsaid on her tongue.

HEALANI

(pause)

Did you know I was the one-

Paul cuts her off, frustration boiling.

PAUL

They're rushing me to bury him. I  
haven't even seen the autopsy  
report. What's the cause of death?  
The whole thing's a fubar.

Healani studies him - does he know more than he's saying?

EXT. PATH - DAY

Trees arch overhead. A stream flows beside them. Healani  
watches Paul - reading him.

HEALANI

My forefathers have called this  
home for centuries. My dad's side  
is Portuguese from the Azores...  
but my heart aches for the places  
I've never seen.

Paul pulls himself out of 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 - full  
of stories and tradition. Makes me  
a hapa girl.

PAUL

That's beautiful.

She slows, studying him.

HEALANI

Tell me about your grandfather.

Paul fumbles in a pocket, pulling out the worn photo.

PAUL

Here's what I showed you. This was  
with him when he died.

Healani takes it - her expression shifts, subtle but  
unmistakable.

She recoils a fraction.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You okay?

HEALANI

I'm fine. It reminds me of  
something.

She looks again.

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 to him - wistful, unsettled.

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

HEALANI

Let's go.

Paul hesitates - caught between desire and suspicion. He  
urges his horse forward.

EXT. BYPATH - LATER

Humidity hangs thick.

Healani halts her horse, tying her hair back. She gestures to the trailing horse.

HEALANI

Paul, hand me a towel from the saddle bag?

He dismounts, retrieves it, hands it over - awkward, hopeful.

PAUL

I was thinking... maybe we could get together sometime? Without Jorge.

Healani wipes her neck, eyebrow arched.

HEALANI

You're tall. Play basketball?

Paul leans in - hopeful. She tosses a towel in his face.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

Git.

She kicks her horse into a gallop.

Paul stands there, stunned, towel in hand.

He scrambles back onto his horse - just as it rears.

PAUL

Whoa! Wait - was that a yes?

Healani disappears into the horizon's colors.

Paul chases after her, cheeks flushed.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A small, rural graveyard. Frugal headstones lean at odd angles, worn by time, each a eulogy to a loss.

PAUL, hand trembling, lowers a delicate rose onto a wooden casket.

PAUL  
(whispering)  
How can I ever say good-bye?

His eyes fall shut as grief overtakes him.

Flashes of fishing trips, warm laughter, shared gifts flicker like old film.

He steps back, unsteady, breath hitching.

Mr. G approaches, not pitying, just present, wrapping around his shoulders.

A gust of wind rattles the dry grass. PAUL blinks hard, fighting the sting in his eyes.

MR. G  
You'll get answers. One step at a time.

Paul nods, but his jaw tightens - a conviction behind the grief.

In a distant parking lot, JACK stands beside his cruiser, arms locked across his chest, expression unreadable.

He checks his watch, takes a drag on a cigarette, smoke curling into the air like a warning.

Mr. G notices.

MR. G  
Paul - we best speak with Jack.

They stride toward him.

CEMETERY PARKING LOT

JACK straightens, snuffing out the cigarette - shedding discomfort like old skin.

JACK  
Mr. G.... Mr. Sands. My condolences.

Mr. G keeps his voice steady.

MR. G  
What have you got for us, Jack?

JACK pulls out a manila envelope, his tone dropping into business.

JACK  
Autopsy didn't give us a cause.  
Still undetermined.

He hands the envelope to Paul. Paul's fingers shake as he takes it.

PAUL  
(hoarse)  
What about the other thing?

JACK lifts a hand - a quiet warning.

JACK  
The investigation stays open. A blood sample is at the university. They'll run the analysis.

A spark of purpose behind the grief.

PAUL  
And me? Am I still a suspect?

MR, G steadies him with a firm hand.

MR. G  
Easy Paul, breathe.

Jack clears his throat.

JACK  
As for your inquiry, Mr. G - no William Sands on record. But a William Sanderson shows up in '93.

MR. G  
Appreciate it, Jack.

Jack nods, heading for the driver's door. Paul hesitates, then steps forward.

PAUL  
That man at the race track... the one you asked about. I saw him again. Beach house. Sheets on a line. Field glasses. He was watching something.

Jack studies him - a beat of recognition, concern.

A simple nod. He gets in the car. Door shuts. Engine fades down the road.

Paul stands in the quiet, the envelope heavy in his hand - the name Sanderson heavier still.

INT. OTTO KUEHN HOME - DAY

Morning light filters through dusty air.

OTTO stands at the mantel, fingers trembling over a photo of his children.

Behind him - the scrape of metal. ISAMU sharpens a knife with slow, deliberate strokes.

ISAMU

We need more detail on the harbor movements.

Otto turns, breath quickening.

OTTO

I was just there! I'm not some schleichen to be caught in the open.

Isamu steps in, closing the space.

ISAMU

Stop your whining. Victory is close. You'll have your glory.

OTTO

Glory? At what cost?

Isamu's eyes harden.

ISAMU

By decree, I will rule Hawaii.

Otto's fists clench - fear and guilt warring on his face.

OTTO

No. Nicht mehr. I'm done. Tell your Kapitan I quit.

He turns away - a wave crashes outside, punctuating the moment.

Isamu moves fast, grabbing Otto from behind.

The KNIFE kisses Otto's neck, a thin line of blood.

ISAMU  
You quit, your family dies.

Otto is petrified.

OTTO  
Meine familie? Bitte... Don't hurt  
them.

The blade shifts. A cold truth under his jaw.

ISAMU  
What did you say?

OTTO  
(whisper)  
Nothing. They are innocent. I make  
the report. No mistakes.

Isamu tightens his grip, tension enough to choke on.

ISAMU  
Remember what's at stake.

Isamu shoves him forward.

The knife's bloodied edge glints a final warning.

Otto stands there, shaking - hope deflating like air from a punctured lung.

EXT. KAILUA SCHOOL YARD - DAY

The sun beams down on a sprawling playground.

A basketball thuds in steady rhythm across the weathered court.

PAUL watches from the sideline as HARUTO SUZUKI (14) weaves past a pack of teenagers.

He smiles, eyes brighten - the memory of playing ball, youthful days of fun and freedom.

MIKE CACCAVALE (15) lunges for a wild steal.

MIKE  
Stop hogging the ball! Ball hog!

Groans. A few boys drift away.

PAUL  
Hold up fellas. One minute.

They pause. Haruto fires a pass at Mike.

Paul steps in - snatches it clean - glides into a smooth dribble, and drops a jumper through the net.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Alright. Keep it moving.

He snaps a crisp pass to Haruto. The kid catches it, eyes wide.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Fun's good. But the game is also about sharing the court.

A shadow crosses the court - HEALANI approaches, amused.

HEALANI  
Busy man. I heard they lost their coach to the military.

HARUTO  
Mister, you should be our coach!

Paul winces, rubs a knee, masking the twinge.

PAUL  
You just work on making each other better.

Haruto pivots, fires a perfect bounce pass to Mike.

His shot drops. The boys erupt.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
That's it. Lift each other up.

He glances at Healani, a grin tugging at him.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Speaking of lifting spirits... how about a date tonight?

She tilts her head, mock-considering.

HEALANI  
Maybe... if you were to say, coach the team.

Paul laughs, playing along.

PAUL  
Sounds like you're negotiating a  
trade deal.

She steps closer. Eyes bright.

HEALANI  
Feels more like extortion, Mr.  
Sands.

They share a laugh.

The court noise fades under Paul's thoughts.

PAUL  
(to himself)  
What if all this joy slips away -  
like my family?

He stands there, smile dimming, the import of the day  
settling back onto him.

EXT. KAILUA TOWN - NIGHT

Healani and Paul walk hand-in-hand.

LAUGHTER spills from a pool hall.

A distant shout fractures the calm - tension humming beneath  
the evening air.

Without warning, Healani slips her hand from his, folding  
her arms protectively.

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

Paul slows, concern tightening his brow.

PAUL  
What do you mean?

Her gaze drifts - haunted by something not said.

HEALANI  
You... me. I know where this leads,  
Paul. It's not a good ending.

Paul steps closer, voice low, urgent.

PAUL

I don't think of you that way.

HEALANI

(sarcastic)

Oh? You don't even know how long  
you'll stick around.

He pulls her close and kisses her - gentle, grounding.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Tomorrow at the court... I'll be  
there.

She raises an eyebrow - surprised, amused.

HEALANI

Are you really going to help the  
team, or are you just being cute?

PAUL

I played some. Never coached. I'll  
give it a shot.

A smile breaks her face. She threads her fingers through  
his.

HEALANI

You know what you need? To believe.

Healani taps her head, then her heart.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

Not just here-  
(then)  
In here, too.

PAUL

I've heard this before.

HEALANI

You need to dig deep. 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 you'll be the next  
Hall of Fame coach.

They round a corner - the atmosphere shifts.

ISAMU and his gang linger in the shadows, their presence chilling the air.

Paul stiffens.

PAUL  
Detective Burns... it's like oil  
and water.

HEALANI  
I've met him.

PAUL  
They sent blood and a sample to the  
university. No idea what they've  
found.

HEALANI  
Does anyone know?

PAUL  
Not a clue-  
(then)  
But I truly think it killed him.

They pull up short - eyes locked - the weight of truth  
between them.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
I ask for information and they turn  
away. Do I have the plague or  
something?

HEALANI  
Islanders see you as an outsider  
first. Show them you care... about  
Hawaii.

PAUL  
Easier said than done.

HEALANI  
I should tell you, I found-

Before she can finish, Isamu and his gang close in -  
baseball bats in hand.

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

He shoves Paul - hard.

A vicious kick drops Paul to a knee.

ISAMU (CONT'D)  
Yankee dung. You were told to  
leave.

Paul rises - pain burning, resolve igniting.

PAUL  
(grimacing)  
I won't back down.

He throws a quick right cross - catching Isamu off-guard.

But the victory is brief.

BATS slam down, staggering him again.

HEALANI  
Stop! You're hurting him.

Isamu grabs a fist full of her hair - rage twisting his face.

ISAMU  
Don't be na[U+02BB]aupō. Don't be  
stupid!

WHISTLES pierce the night - POLICE approaching fast.

Isamu shoves Healani away, wiping blood from his lip.

ISAMU (CONT'D)  
Remember this, girl. The world is  
changing - and so will you.

He signals the gang.

They vanish into the shadows as police flood the street.

Healani turns to Paul - breathless, shaken.

HEALANI  
That was reckless. We need to talk  
about this.

PAUL  
I won't let them intimidate us.

She reaches out, resting a hand on his arm, the connection deepening.

HEALANI  
I know... but we need to be smart  
about it.

Healani looks into his eyes.

HEALANI (CONT'D)  
Meet me tomorrow night. By the old  
heiau above the ridge.

PAUL  
I'll be there. Together, then?

HEALANI  
Together.

Sirens echo - sealing their pact.

INT. HONOLULU LIBRARY - DAY

Paul limps into the lobby, wincing as he shifts his weight.  
A hand presses his lower back.

He inhales - scanning the quiet aisles - aware of eyes on  
him.

A display table catches his attention.

A text book stands out: HAWAII.

He grabs it, flips through - stops at:

INSERT:

HAWAIIAN CENSUS - Pg. 391

Paul approaches a LIBRARIAN (30s).

She avoids his gaze, twirling a pen.

PAUL  
(urgent)  
Excuse me.

She doesn't respond - until he holds up the book.

She leans in, curiosity breaking through her indifference.

LIBRARIAN  
(quiet, wistful)  
The census holds many secrets.

A subtle kinship forms. She gestures toward a row of  
aisles... Find your story there.

PAUL  
Mahalo.

LIBRARY AISLE

Paul scans the shelves - back aching - something catches his eye.

A thick, embroidered hardback.

He pulls it free.

INSERT:

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CENSUS 1890-1900

He glances over a shoulder - wary of prying eyes - then moves to a table.

Another book on it catches his eye - colorful, inviting.

INSERT:

POISONOUS FLOWERS AND PLANTS OF THE UNITED STATES

Paul sets the census aside. He skims through the flora guide.

Pages flutter - then stop.

Magnified white flowers. A spiked seed pod.

INSERT:

SPECIES: D. WRIGHTII

FAMILY: SOLANACEAE (SACRED DATURA)

His face drains - realization slamming him.

PAUL  
(to himself, panic rising)  
No... no...

He snaps the book shut - breath quickening, sweat beading.

Paul grabs the census, sliding low in the chair - the truth heavy, settling like a stone.

EXT. ANCIENT HEIAU - EVENING

Wind sweeps across the stone platform, carrying the sunset. The sky burns orange.

Paul climbs the final steps, breath uneven, census report held firm.

Healani waits at the edge of the heiau - calm, grounded, a silhouette in fading light.

She turns as he approaches.

HEALANI

You found something.

Paul nods - shaken.

PAUL

I think... I think somebody  
poisoned him.

Healani takes it in - not shocked, but saddened.

She gestures for him to sit beside her.

HEATHER

This place... my ancestors came  
here to listen. Not the wind - but  
what it carried.

Paul sits - unsure, vulnerable.

PAUL

I don't know what to do next.

Healani studies him - really sees him.

HEALANI

You're looking for answers in  
books. But some answers... you have  
to feel.

She places a hand over his heart - echoing Iwalani's gesture.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

Your grandfather wasn't just a  
visitor here. He was connected to  
something deeper.

Paul swallows.

PAUL

I saw her. Iwalani. At the bay homes. She knew something.

Healani's eyes widen - brief recognition.

HEALANI

Then the past is waking up for you. And once it wakes - it doesn't go back to sleep.

Paul looks out over the valley - the wind rising around them.

PAUL

Why me?

Healani leans closer - voice soft, certain.

HEALANI

Because you're not running anymore.

A beat.

The moment deepens.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

Whatever is next - you're no longer alone.

Paul meets her gaze.

The wind swirls. The heiau hums with resonance.

PAUL

Thank you.

He puts his arm around her.

They sit together as the sun dips low - past and present converging.

EXT. NU'UANU HOME - DAY

The Hudson glides through a lush canopy, stone walls guiding the way toward a secluded estate.

It opens to a circular drive. Paul cuts the engine.

Stepping stones lead to a handcrafted wooden door.

Suddenly - it swings open.

JUNICHI (17), the house boy, bows deeply.

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

Paul straightens, unsure - when a soft voice interrupts.

IWALANI, radiant in a colorful mu'umu'u, approaches with a quiet authority.

Junichi bows again and steps aside.

INT. NU'UANU HOME CONTINUOUS

The interior is serene - tropical decor, soft light, the sound of trickling water.

Paul sits where Iwalani motions, still unsettled, still seeking the meaning of it all.

PAUL  
Thank you... thank you for seeing  
me.

She glides to an interior fish pond, kneeling.

Iwalani swirls her fingers in the water - fish darting around her touch.

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

She turns, meeting Paul's gaze - searching him.

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

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

Her eyes brighten.

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

Iwalani rises - elegant, wistful.

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

Paul leans forward - anxious.

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

A soft, reverent smile.

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

PAUL  
I have. it's why I'm here.

The stillness settles - heavy, expectant.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
My grandfather came with me to  
Hawaii. Before he died...  
(hesitant)  
I think he was here to see you.

Her breath catches.

IWALANI  
What was his name?

PAUL  
William. William Sands. Or maybe...  
Sanderson?

Iwalani's expression collapses - disbelief, then sorrow.

A lifetime of memory crashes over her.

IWALANI  
No... no.

Tears well. She clutches her chest - grief decades old  
rising anew.

Silence consumes the room.

Her eyes glisten, a haunting sadness spilling over.

IWALANI (CONT'D)  
My keiki... my dear keiki... no  
more talk.

Paul stands unsure. Iwalani suddenly steps forward.

She embraces him in the Hawaiian way, kissing the air beside each cheek.

He steadies himself, then gently reveals the money clip and photograph.

PAUL  
Do you remember these?

Iwalani stares - the world draining color from her face.

She sinks into a chair, tears spilling freely.

IWALANI  
Iwalani not see visitors... keiki  
come back another time.

She weeps - the past pressing down upon both of them.

For Paul, the truth is close - but too painful to speak.

INT. OTTO KUEHN HOME - NIGHT

Otto climbs a narrow stairwell, the walls lined with framed swastikas and Hitler rallies.

The images glow under dim bulbs - symbols that once emboldened, now tightening around his throat.

He stops. Stares. Loosens his collar.

LOFT

He enters the attic and pulls on a chain.

A lone bulb sparks to life, revealing a worn chair and distressed desk.

A 1941 calendar hangs tilted, December 1st-5th marked through with heavy X's.

Otto lowers himself into the chair. The wood groans under the burden of memory.

Trembling hands set a GRAMOPHONE spinning. The vinyl wobbles, then steadies.

German MUSIC fills the cramped space.

He drags a lamp toward the window - pulling back a curtain - revealing a barred square of glass.

His wristwatch ticks loudly - each second a reminder.

He releases the curtain. Repeats the ritual.

Again. Again.

Finally, he exhales - marks an X on December 6th.

He leans back. Eyes close. Sleep overtakes him.

The record reaches its inner ring - the needle scratching out a rhythm.

Harsh, relentless.

Like war.

EXT. SUBMARINE - NIGHT

A PERISCOPE breaks the surface of a black sea.

Distant lights shimmer on the hillsides.

INT. SUBMARINE - CONTROL ROOM

CROSS HAIRS magnify a seaside home.

A single lamp BLINKS twice, then goes dark.

CAPTAIN SAKURA, (40s), hardened by battle, lowers the periscope.

Locks it with practiced ease.

He turns to JAPANESE OFFICER TAKAHASHI, (20s), lean, disciplined, standing at attention.

SAKURA  
(subtitle)  
Status of decipher reports?

TAKAHASHI  
(subtitle)  
Sir, codes are confirmed authentic.

Sakura tightens his grip on a small card - his hand trembling.

SAKURA  
(subtitle)  
The American warship... confirmed?

TAKAHASHI  
(subtitle)  
Yes. It has entered the harbor.

Sakura's eyes burn. He barks a command.

SAKURA  
(subtitle)  
Ready all crew for Operation Z. Do it now.

Takahashi flinches - a moment of doubt - salutes sharply.

He exits with rigid precision.

INT. SUBMARINE - BULKHEAD

ISAMU sits cross-legged on the cold metal floor - eyes closed.

Pipes throb overhead - a pulse that echos.

The hatch wheel spins. A heavy CLICK.

Takahashi steps inside, hesitant.

Isamu's eyes snap open.

TAKAHASHI  
(subtitle)  
Most Honorable One. Captain requires your immediate preparation.

He bows deeply, then withdraws, sealing the hatch behind him.

Isamu rises in a single fluid motion - moves to a cramped bathroom.

He faces the mirror - fierce, unwavering.

ISAMU  
(subtitle)  
World under one roof.

A beat.

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

He lifts a STRAIGHT-EDGED RAZOR from a worn cup, wets it.  
Lowers the razor -- not toward his throat, but to his scalp.  
Slow, deliberate strokes. The hair falls in soft clumps.  
Holding the razor high, the weight of the oath settles.  
He snarls, eyes igniting.  
It begins.

EXT. LANIKAI BAY - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) Mokulua islands rise like silhouettes over Lanikai Bay, O'ahu, Hawaii.
- B) A waning moon drifts between slow-moving clouds.
- C) A fishing boat sways gently, tossing to the soft strum of a UKULELE.

EXT. LANIKAI BEACH - NIGHT

Two lovers weave through the dunes - PAUL and Healani breathless with joy.

He catches her in a playful embrace.

PAUL  
How'd I get so lucky.

She slips free, laughing, scooping up a seashell.

HEALANI  
So you think you're gonna get  
lucky?

She tosses it. He ducks. They collide in a heated kiss.

## EXT. FISHERMAN'S BOAT - NIGHT

A JAPANESE-HAWAIIAN FISHERMAN, (60s), sits at the bow - ukulele in hand.

A kerosene lamp casts shadows across nets and bamboo rods.

Beneath the boat - BUBBLES rise. A shape glides past.

A PERISCOPE surfaces behind the fishing boat - disappears.

## SUBMARINE

Moments later - a JAPANESE SUBMARINE breaks the waterline - silent, stealthy.

A HATCH exhales, opens. A DUFFEL BAG lands on the deck with a clank of metal.

Isamu emerges, dressed in dark blue, scanning the night.

He shoulders the bag - crosses the submarine deck - leaps onto the fishing boat.

Effortless precision.

## BOAT DECK

Isamu sets down the duffel. Draws a knife - the blade catching moonlight.

He moves past the cabin - the ukulele stops abruptly - a muffled cry.

Silence.

He reappears, composed, dragging the corpse across the deck, a trail of murderous ink tracking.

He pauses. A moment of solemnity.

ISAMU

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

Isamu cleans the blade, sheaths it, and hoists the body overboard into the water.

EXT. SHORELINE - NIGHT

The fishing boat grinds into shallow surf - the motor sputters out - an anchor drops.

Isamu slips over the side, wading toward shore.

BEACH

Moonlight breaks through clouds, silvering the boat.

Isamu reaches for the bow - the crescent scar glistening.

A voice near him.

PAUL

Isamu-

Isamu recoils, pressing against the hull.

Paul approaches carefully.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I know it's you.

Isamu draws the knife, slipping into the water, neck-deep.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Leave Healani alone. She's not yours. She never was.

Paul turns away.

Isamu emerges behind him - silent, sudden - the blade at Paul's throat.

ISAMU

I should cut you open like a pua'a.

Healani gasps, stepping forward.

HEALANI

Isamu... no.

A beat - conflict covering her face.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

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

Isamu cocks his head - the dark urge to kill hovering.

He lowers the knife. Shoves Paul away.

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 - resolve hardening.

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

He slips into the shadows.

Paul moves to follow - Healani grabs his arm.

HEALANI  
Paul.

He stops. Breathes.

They stand together, shaken.

HEALANI (CONT'D)  
Did you see that scar? The man is haunted by something.

Paul nods, protective.

PAUL  
We're safe now.

They turn into the darkness.

Isamu reaches the boat - lifts the duffel - disappears up the beach.

A dog BARKS - then a sharp, sudden silence.

EXT. INLET - (LATER)

Healani and Paul walk hand-in-hand toward a secluded cove, moonlight gliding over untouched sand.

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

PAUL  
(firm, protective)  
He won't get to you. He'd have to  
walk over my dead body first.

HEALANI  
We should report this.

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

He draws her closer. A quiet moment. Healani exhales, tension slipping from her shoulders.

HEALANI  
What am I going to do with you?

Paul eases her down, placing his shirt beneath her.

She leans back, a strap falling loose.

Their lips meet - a deepening kiss... as waves whisper secrets to the shore.

EXT. LANIKAI BEACH - DAY

Morning sun filters through overcast skies. The teal water shimmers with prismatic light.

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

PAUL and HEALANI stroll along the beach.

She watches him, concern tugging at her brow.

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

A quiet pause. Only the cry of seagulls in the distance.

MOKAPU

A sudden BLAST shakes the air. MACHINE-GUN FIRE rips across the distant landscape.

Paul and Healani spin toward the airbase. Black SMOKE mushrooms upward, staining the sky.

Airplanes swoop like predatory hawks. They sharply bank toward the ground.

PAUL  
(puzzled)  
What the hell? On a Sunday?

Planes peel away - slicing toward Lanikai Beach.

One breaks formation - dives - unleashing a burst of gunfire that shreds the stillness.

LANIKAI BEACH

Rising suns glint off METAL skin. Two JAPANESE ZEROS sweep low - straight for them.

HEALANI  
(trembling)  
What's happening?

Paul and Healani stumble back, panic rising. They run.

MACHINE GUNFIRE tears into sand and surf around them.

Healani screams - raw, terrified.

The planes climb, banking away, pilots offering a mock salute before vanishing into chaos.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Paula and Healani crouch behind bushes, shaking.

A truck SCREECHES to a halt.

JORGE leaps out - frantic, wild-eyed - staring at bullet holes stitched across the truck bed.

JORGE  
(breathless)  
The Japs are attackin'! We gotta go... NOW!

Healani and Paul sprint toward him.

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

They pile into the cab, united by shock, bound by fear.

INT./EXT. TRUCK - DAY - MOVING

Jorge grips the wheel, knuckles white. The truck jolts forward.

JORGE

They shot at us! Can you believe it?

A distant explosion echos. He cranks the radio - CHURCH MUSIC blares, absurd against the mayhem.

HEALANI

Doesn't anyone know what's happening?

Paul and Healani exchange a worried look.

Jorge shifts gears - the truck barrels down the road, dust rising behind them.

INT. HONOLULU FBI BUILDING - DAY

Jack strides through a bustling office.

Phones ring, typewriters clack, agents shout over one another.

A RECEPTIONIST (20s) juggles two calls, eyes wide. She nods toward a nearby door.

FBI OFFICE

Jack enters a cramped room.

A brass NAMEPLATE gleams:

ROBERT L. SHIVERS

SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE

ROBERT SHIVERS (40s), slender, composed but strained, grips a phone.

He cups a hand over the receiver, acknowledging Jack with a glance.

ROBERT

Governor Poindexter.

Jack closes the door softly, the click echoing.

Robert's tone shifts, forcing calm into his voice.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Yes, sir. It's necessary. I agree  
with General Short.

He braces himself, listening.

ROBERT (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 listens, every muscle taut.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
I understand, sir... I know.

Another long silence.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
I promise. We'll do everything in  
our power.  
(then)  
Thank you, sir. God bless.

He hangs up - relief and dread mixing across his face.

Jack sinks into a chair.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
I can't believe this. What a  
nightmare. The Governor was crying.

Jack shakes his head - stunned.

JACK  
So is it a go?

The words hang heavy, inevitable. Shivers rubs his temples.

ROBERT  
It's a go.

The weight shifts between them.

Jack leans forward - steady, resolute.

JACK  
Then we move. We owe it to the  
people... to Hawaii.

Shivers nods once - a grim pact sealed.

INT./EXT. TRUCK - DAY - MOVING

The truck cab buzzes with static. Outside, beach blurs past in streaks of sand and surf.

Military vehicles line the road - SOLDIERS dig foxholes - hedgehog barriers dot the shoreline.

PILLBOXES stare out to sea, machine guns ready.

PAUL

That submarine... I should've reported it.

Jorge's jaw tightens - he eases off the accelerator. The truck slows.

HEALANI

(glancing at Paul)

Look...

Ahead - a military ROAD BLOCK. Armed MARINES stand like statues, rifles raised.

MARINE PRIVATE DAVIDSON (20s) steps forward, rifle aimed.

DAVIDSON

Halt!

He approaches the truck, eyes sharp.

DAVIDSON (CONT'D)

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

Jorge leans out, sweat beading on his brow.

JORGE

Mokapu... Lanikai.

Davidson studies the truck bed, then Jorge.

DAVIDSON

You armed?

PAUL

No! Just trying to get to safety.

Davidson's eyes bore onto Paul - testing him.

DAVIDSON  
What's the rush?

Paul swallows, gripping the seat.

PAUL  
We need to check on our friends.

A beat.

Davidson lowers the rifle - gives a thumbs up.

The guardrail swings open.

The Marines wave them through - uncertainty hanging in the air like smoke.

INT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - NIGHT

A SHORT WAVE RADIO TRANSMITTER sputters static and sporadic updates.

MR. G and NAN sit close, hands intertwined.

Healani clings to PAUL wide-eyed, breath labored.

Jorge paces like a caged bull.

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

Silence settles - heavy, suffocating. Nan rises and leaves the room.

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

RADIO  
(filtered)  
Japanese mini-sub. Bellows Field...  
Waimanalo Point.

NAN (O.S.)  
Someone said they were landing on  
the North Shore. Thank God it  
wasn't true.

Nan re-enters. The radio crackles again - a grim soundtrack.

MR. G  
Even the strongest walls can  
crumble... they declared martial  
law.

JORGE  
(grim)  
Good reason to stay inside. We  
should prep for the blackout.

Paul and Healani exchange a look - their plans, their  
future, fracturing under the weight of war.

HEALANI  
What if they invade us?

The question hangs - raw and real.

PAUL  
Then we fight like hell.

Paul stares out the window - darkness reflected in his eyes.

INT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - DAY

First light filters through the lanai. Paul spoons HEALANI  
on a cot.

Jorge nudges him. Paul groans, rolls away. Jorge nudges  
harder.

JORGE  
Rise and shine, Hollywood. Follow  
me.

PAUL sits up, yawning as HEALANI murmurs, curling deeper  
into her blankets.

PAUL  
What the hell, Jorge?

He stretches, feet hitting the floor.

JORGE  
C'mon. No time to explain.

Paul follows him into the living room. MR. G emerges,  
rubbing sleep from his eyes.

MR. G  
What's all the commotion about?

JORGE  
Glad you're up, Mr. G. We have a situation.

He leads them toward the patio.

EXT. PATIO - CONTINUOUS

Kenji paces in the shadows, ocean waves crashing behind him. Jorge, Paul and Mr. G step out. Kenji spins, bowing deeply.

KENJI  
Much thanks, Mr. Jorge... Mr. G,  
Mr. Paul. I fear they will take me today.

Mr. G steps closer - protective.

MR. G  
Who's coming for you?

Kenji glances around, nervous.

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?

KENJI  
Must hide personal things. No hide, no safe.

MR. G  
We stand together or we fall apart.

KENJI  
There is other thing. Not everyone good neighbor.

Kenji wrings his hand, desperate.

KENJI (CONT'D)  
Someone 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 stiffens.

PAUL  
I know who it is.

JORGE  
A real jerk.

PAUL  
You should report this.

Kenji shakes his head violently.

KENJI  
No! Man like me... no trust.

The exchange a look - Kenji needs their help.

EXT. KAILUA SCHOOL - DAY

Overcast skies cast a gray pallor. Jorge's truck crunches  
over gravel.

Paul steps out - stunned.

The school grounds have transformed into a crisis center.

Jorge speeds away, leaving him behind.

Tents everywhere. Women weeping. Children playing -  
innocence colliding with grief.

A RED CROSS van pulls in, siren muted. CIVILIANS and SOLDIERS gather.

HEALANI rushes to Paul - collapsing into his arms.

HEALANI  
All of these families. Their  
husbands, their fathers-  
(voice breaking)  
We're losing them, Paul. The  
wounded are in classrooms. The  
hospitals... overflowing.

PAUL  
Anything I can do? How can I help?

She wipes a tear, her finger pointing toward MR. G - unloading supplies with a focus.

HEALANI  
Mr. G... he'll know.

Paul releases her gently - purpose forming.

He approaches Mr. G who tosses him a stack of blankets.

Paul catches them - a brief smile cutting through the gloom.

MR. G  
Glad you're here. Distribute  
those... help with the food. It's  
all hands on deck.

A HAM RADIO crackles.

BROADCASTER  
Now hear this! Now hear this!  
Today, at 12:30 P.M. Eastern Time  
the United States Congress declared  
war with Japan.

A sedan SCREECHES to a halt.

Two LARGE FBI MEN (20s) leap out - authority radiating.

Nearby, an ISAMU GANG LOCAL unloads food. He freezes as they approach.

They wrench his arms back - handcuffs snapping shut.

A police cruiser pulls in. The window rolls down. Jack leans out - scanning - until he spots Mr. G.

JACK  
Mr. G... over here!

Paul hands out a blanket - looks up just in time to see Jack's approving nod.

Their eyes meet - distrust giving way to something else.

The vehicles pull away, leaving tension in their wake.

Mr. G rushes back to Paul.

MR. G  
It's happening everywhere. They arrested Otto Kuehn.

Paul's expression hardens. They share a look - camaraderie forged in crisis.

INT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - NIGHT

Folded cardboard shields a flickering candle. Soft light caresses the walls.

A black curtain drapes a bay window.

Paul and Healani sit at the kitchen table - a gulf of unspoken words between them.

The feint clank of dishes punctuates the silence.

Nan washes a plate. She glances over a shoulder - sensing the tension.

NAN  
Your letter to the coroner-

PAUL  
(interrupting, weary)  
I know... too much death. They're swamped.

Healani leans in - intensity rising.

HEALANI  
But you hold the key to a locked door! You must try.

PAUL  
(quiet)  
The war isn't going away.

She searches his eye.

HEALANI

Where is it?

PAUL

In the guest room. It won't bring  
him back.

A beat.

Her temper snaps.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

(voice rising)

What do you mean? It was me - me! I  
was the one who found your  
grandfather.

Her voice cracks - grief and frustration clashing.

HEALANI (CONT'D)

You owe him. You owe us.

(Hawaiian)

The path is clear!

(soft, urgent)

You can't stop believing.

She clenches her fist, then storms out.

Paul hunches over the table, regret flooding his face.

PAUL

I wasn't giving up...

NAN turns off the faucet, wipes her hands, voice gentle yet  
firm.

NAN

She's tired. We're all tired.  
You've never turned back before,  
right? The morning is a new day.

She rests a comforting hand on his shoulder.

NAN (CONT'D)

In this eye of the storm... find  
your strength.

Paul nods - staring into the shadows.

INT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - DAY

Paul sleeps on a couch. The CREAK of a front door wakes him.

Healani stands in the doorway - dressed to ride, eyes conflicted.

HEALANI

I thought we could face this together. But I can't watch things unravel.

(then)

Not when everything else is falling apart.

The door SLAMS behind her.

Paul stares at the ceiling - stunned.

EXT. GILLESPIE HOUSE - DAY

Healani unties her horse. The morning hush deepens - the ocean's roar fading.

From the shadows - ISAMU appears.

He yanks Healani back, gloved hand covering her mouth, knife pressed to her neck.

His eyes burn with treachery.

ISAMU

(hissing)

Stay silent... or feel my wrath.  
Others have. You don't know what I can do.

He drags her toward an idling car. Gang members lurk inside. A back door swings open.

He shoves her in - a hood slips over her head - her muffled gasp pierces the silence.

Isamu smirks, scans the area, slides inside.

The door SLAMS. The car peels away.

GILLESPIE HOUSE - (LATER)

The PHONE rings relentlessly. Paul jolts awake, scrambling. He grabs the receiver.

PAUL  
Hello? Gillespies.

JORGE  
(filtered)  
Hollywood.... meet me in Kailua.

PAUL  
What's happening? Is it Healani?

JORGE  
(filtered)  
Just hurry. I need help with the horses.

The line goes dead.

Paul stares at the phone - dread rising.

EXT. KAILUA TOWN - DAY

The main street lies empty under a morning sun. Dust swirls. PAUL and JORGE ride horses - hooves echoing.

U.S. ARMY SOLDIERS linger at corners, cigarette embers glowing, eyes wary.

JORGE  
(taut)  
Healani didn't come home.

PAUL  
She left her horse... something's wrong.

Jorge's gaze darkens. He stares at the cinema marquee - once vibrant, now blank.

JORGE  
There's a vacant building behind the theater. Someone was there last night-  
(then)  
What he said, I can't shake it.

PAUL  
You mean Kenji?

JORGE  
Yeah. I found out... he's in  
custody.

PAUL  
(shocked)  
No way! Did he mention Healani?

His concern twists his features.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
You think it was Isamu?

JORGE  
(low)  
She called me this morning. I rode  
here to meet her.

PAUL  
You think she's in trouble?  
(realizing)  
If he took her...

JORGE  
The man is obsessed. We need to  
check that building.

They lock eyes - then kick their horses into a gallop.

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 -  
breath shallow, focused.

The distant SOUND of galloping horses echos through the  
building.

Isamu creeps over to a window - eyes narrowing.

EXT. TETHER POST - CONTINUOUS

Paula and Jorge slow their horses. Boots hit the ground.

Leather creaks as they tie the reins.

Paul meets Jorge's eyes - resolve shared.

JORGE  
You sure about this now, right?

PAUL  
We don't have a choice. If he's here... Healani might be, too.

Jorge nods - masking fear.

Paul signals - they split up.

INT. VACANT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Isamu grabs the duffel bag - slings it over his shoulder - retreats toward the rear exit.

A sinister smile curls his lips, savoring the chaos he's engineered.

He slips into the darkness.

EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Paul edges toward the rear.

Isamu bursts from his cover, sprinting away.

PAUL  
Jorge!... Jorge! - Over here!

A deafening BLAST erupts. The shock slams into Paul.

A plume of smoke spirals skyward.

He races toward the front -

EXT. SLIDING DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Jorge lies broken.

Charred ruins. Smoke. Debris.

Paul drops to his knees, trembling.

JORGE  
Sorry, Hollywood.

Paul's eyes fill, disbelief choking him.

PAUL

It's okay, amigo. I've got you.

JORGE

Take care of my sis'-  
(weak)  
Keep her... safe.

A faint smile. A final breath. Jorge goes still.

Paul collapses - grief tearing out of him in a guttural scream.

He clenches his fists, pain bending his face.

The SOUND of APPROACHING SOLDIERS pulls him back. Grief hardens into rage.

Paul rises - unties his horse - mounts in one motion. He kicks hard.

The horse surges forward - riding straight into the shadows of vengeance.

EXT: KAWAI NUI - DAY

Paul leaps off the horse, tying it up with shaking hands.

Swaying reeds hiss in the wind, cloaking his search.

He tears them apart. A trampled trail leads deeper into the marsh.

He looks back. All is clear. A deep breath. Paul slips between the tall stalks.

The leafy curtain closes behind him - sealing the path toward confrontation.

EXT. MAUNA - DAY

PAUL climbs with purpose, following an elevated trail. The slope steepens. A fogdog drifts through the ridgeline.

A sudden metallic scrape splits the air. Paul freezes - peeks from behind an overhang.

ISAMU - knife clenched between teeth - drags the duffel bag to a level clearing.

Behind him, HEALANI sits bound and gagged. Her eyes widen - disbelief and fear colliding at the sight of Paul.

ISAMU stands tall, oozing confidence. He opens the duffel - a TRIPOD unfolds with a heavy CLUNK.

Paul gathers himself, inching closer - raw emotion creeping across his face.

PAUL  
(with grit)  
Not today, Healani. I won't let him take you. Time to believe.

With a burst of energy - Paul charges.

MAUNA CREST

Caught off guard, Isamu spins. The knife flies from his mouth - skidding to a stop near Healani.

Paul slams a fist into the duffel - a SIGNALING LAMP rolls free.

It bounces, gains speed - launches off the cliff.

Paul rebounds - but Isamu retaliates. A brutal strike sends him staggering.

Paul roars - a primal yell - lands a wild punch, knocking Isamu back.

Healani leans forward, straining against the bindings - fingers just inches from the knife.

A frantic shift - she reaches it.

Paul grabs the tripod and hurls - ISAMU dodges, grinning.

A flurry of strikes - Isamu gets the upper hand. Paul drops to a knee - down but not defeated.

Healani saws at her leg restraints - fibers fraying.

The strap breaks free.

ISAMU grabs a LOG, twirls it - CRACK - it slams into Paul's temple.

Paul collapses - dazed but conscious.

ISAMU  
(disdain)  
Such fools... First your grandfather. Now you.

Isamu revels in the moment - towering over Paul.

ISAMU (CONT'D)  
Healani is mine. It's time for you  
to die.  
(then)  
Hakkō Ichiu!

He raises the log - crescent scar gleaming.

Behind him - Healani rises.

She hesitates - summoning everything she has.

A primordial scream - she drives the knife into his back.

Isamu howls.

ISAMU  
No!

Paul spins instinctively - sweeping Isamu's ankle.

Isamu hits the ground - sliding backward - hands clawing in  
desperation.

He slips over the edge - a stroke of luck: An outcrop  
catches him.

He clings there - panting, bleeding - relief washing over  
him.

#### PRECIPICE

Healani collapses beside Paul - rag-doll limp.

Isamu looks up, his wolf-like cunning returning.

ISAMU  
Help! HELP ME!

Healani's gaze falls on Paul. He nods once.

He drags himself to the edge - extends a hand.

ISAMU (CONT'D)  
Don't leave me like this!

Paul reaches, fear of betrayal flickering.

Isamu lunges - grabbing Paul's shirt, yanking him toward the  
drop.

The ground shifts - Paul's eyes widen.

HEALANI  
Paul! Watch out!

Paul wedges his boot into a crevice. His free hand grabs a bush - bending but holding.

ISAMU'S grip falters. The rock beneath him crumbles.

He plunges - flailing - screaming.

ISAMU  
NOOOOO!

Branches rush up to swallow him. He and the lantern vanish into the treetop canopy.

Silence.

Paul slumps back against a rock - trembling - gasping.

His vision blurs.

Healani's face appears - close, alive, filled with concern.

PAUL  
(whispers)  
I thought I lost you.

Darkness spreads, pulling him under.

Paul collapses into unconsciousness.

INT. QUEENS HOSPITAL - DAY

The blurred image sharpens: A HOSPITAL NURSE in scrubs checks a chart.

Her face softens as Paul's eyes flutter open.

She nods - approval, relief - then exits quietly.

Sunlight filters through a window, warm and gentle.

Paul blinks, vision clearing.

Healani sits beside him.

She rises and wraps him in a careful, trembling hug.

HEALANI  
I thought I lost you.

Paul meets her tear-filled gaze - Jorge's death weighing heavily.

PAUL  
Jorge... I couldn't save him.

Healani stifles a sob - touching an arm - grounding him.

HEALANI  
He wouldn't want you to carry that.  
(then, hesitant)  
I sent that letter... the one you  
wrote.

A bittersweet smile touches her lips - hope threaded with sorrow.

HEALANI (CONT'D)  
What should I do with you?

Paul leans back - a spark of light humor breaking through.

PAUL  
Fall in love with me?

Healani shakes her head - but her smile betrays her.

HEALANI  
There is good news... someone  
special is here.

She moves to the door, beckoning.

KEONI enters - warm, resilient - followed closely by IWALANI, dignified even in sorrow.

She hangs a LEI on the T-frame of an IV stand.

IWALANI  
It's pikake. They smell so sweet. I  
hope the nurses let you keep them.

Keoni steps closer, friendly and open.

KEONI  
Nice to meet you, Paul. I'm Keoni.

Paul swallows, emotions swirling.

PAUL

Nice... nice to meet you, too.

KEONI

I'm a volunteer here. I believe in  
the healing power of community. If  
you need anything-

PAUL

Any spare brain cells? I seem to  
have lost a few.

They share a laugh - tension easing.

KEONI

I'll check the lost and found.  
(then)  
Best to leave you now. Until next  
time. Aloha.

He blows a kiss to Iwalani, she returns it with a soft  
smile.

He exits.

Healani turns to Paul.

HEALANI

Iwalani has a surprise for you.

PAUL

Nothing can surprise me now.

Healani and Iwalani exchange a knowing look.

HEALANI

Oh... this might.

Iwalani settles on the edge of the bed - gentle, serious.

IWALANI

Remember when you came to see me?  
You carried such heavy news about  
your grandfather... such a lovely  
man.

She pauses, gathering herself.

IWALANI (CONT'D)

I always knew he would find a way  
to return again.

Healani nods - understanding the gravity of the moment.

IWALANI (CONT'D)  
 It was such a troubled time... so  
 much hate. But we always had each  
 other. Aloha hohonu.

Her gaze drifts - memory overtaking her.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE:

EXT. RAIN FOREST FOOTPATH - DAY

A vibrant, tropical woodland. Birdsong. Sunlight through leaves.

IWALANI and WILLIAM walk hand-in-hand along a path - reach a waterfall cascading into a crystal lagoon.

They kiss - tender, passionate.

IWALANI  
 (filtered)  
 I had to see the queen... share our  
 dreams of marriage.  
 (then)  
 But the coup de'tat... they shot  
 me. I thought it was the end.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NU'UANU HOME - DAY

The roar of the waterfall fades into turmoil.

A GUARD yanks the reins of the royal carriage. It halts abruptly.

The door creaks open.

William emerges - urgent, terrified - carrying a comatose IWALANI in his arms.

IWALANI  
 (filtered)  
 Thanks to William, I survived.  
 (pause)  
 And though he warned me... my  
 loyalty to the monarchy cost us  
 both dearly.

He carries her inside - her eyelids flickering - the world in chaos.

IWALANI (CONT'D)  
(filtered)

My heart was divided - torn between  
duty... and love.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BAMBOO HUT - DAY

Iwalani, arm in a sling, hesitates at the doorway. She pushes it open - breath quickening.

From the shadows HAWAIIAN MEN with rifles rush past her - coordinated, determined.

Her face tightens - danger everywhere.

Iwalani slips inside.

EXT. SUGAR CANE FIELD - DAY

Sun beats down on a parcel of cane.

IWALANI  
(filtered)

The repression grew. There was  
brutality... and death.

Armed militia confront HAWAIIAN WORKERS holding picket signs.

GUNSHOTS erupt. Shouts. Signs fall.

Chaos erupts, workers fighting back, blows landing hard.

IWALANI  
(filtered)

They arrested many... it was only a matter of time. But your kupuna kāne protected me. He removed the guns.

SOUNDS of violence mix with the rustle of sugarcane and...

EXT. BAMBOO HUT - DAY

Tall reeds swaying - shadows dancing.

WILLIAM exits the hut, rifles in hand.

He pauses - glancing back.

A deep breath.

He disappears into the greenery.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. QUEENS HOSPITAL - DAY

Paul leans forward, a sharp pain spikes through his skull.

He winces, holding his head, eyes darting with concern.

PAUL

So he was jailed... because of you?

Iwalani's expression softens - sorrow and memory entwined.

IWALANI

Those in power were furious. They demanded death. And of all things... I was with child.

Paul's eyes widen - empathy swelling.

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

Filed under an assumed name. I thought I was serving the people.

PAUL

What about the child?

Tears glisten in Iwalani's eyes.

IWALANI

It's Keoni. He's our son... ko'u keiki hanau. My beloved son.

Paul looks to the sky. He exhales - a burden lifting.

PAUL  
You were right... Let the ways of  
Aloha guide you.

A beat. He looks at both women - vulnerable, open.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
I thought I'd lost everything. The  
sorrow we now carry... can we break  
the cycle?

Healani touches his hand.

HEALANI  
We must... through the power of  
love.

Their eyes meet - a quiet promise.

Iwalani reaches across, cradling Paul's hand.

IWALANI  
I'm your step-tūtū. It's time we  
weave our own stories together.  
Welcome to our 'ohana, Paul.

Their eyes meet - fates once divided now braided together.

EXT. KAILUA SCHOOL YARD - DAY

The vibrant noise of a basketball court fills the air.

Paul stands near mid-court, handing a line-up card to a referee.

KAILUA PANIOLOS and their HONOLULU rivals run lay-up drills.

Laughter, cheers, and shouts rise from newly built bleachers.

Hawaiians, Japanese, locals and U.S. military pack the stands - not a seat empty.

SEDAN

A POLICE CAR pulls up, engine hums then falls silent.

JACK steps out, scanning the scene until he spots Paul.

JACK  
Paul Sands.

Paul turns - curiosity and tension mixing.

PAUL  
Detective Burns... can't this wait?

Jack steps closer, glancing at the bustling court.

JACK  
You'll want to read this.

He hands Paul an envelope.

Paul opens it, unfolds a formal letterhead.

PAUL  
An autopsy report?

He scans 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

Jack smiles at a PANIOLOS name on a passing jersey.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Your letter... the university  
concurs. Those flowers were-

Paul's expression darkens.

PAUL  
*Datura wrightii*. Sacred Datura.  
Poison.

Jack meets his gaze - concern and respect mingling.

JACK

I've seen a lot in this line of work. When I arrest someone... I'm usually right.

PAUL

But you were wrong about me.

Jack nods - accepting it.

JACK

And you helped take down spies. No easy feat.

Paul smiles - a spark of recognition.

PAUL

Maybe you're the reason why.

Jack studies him - admiration breaking through his guard.

JACK

National security prevents us-

PAUL

(interrupting)

Thanks for setting the record straight... for both of us.

Jack's expression softens.

JACK

These are your islands now. But don't get any ideas... still not sure I like you.

Paul chuckles - tension dissolving.

JACK (CONT'D)

(almost smiling)

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 away.

Paul watches him go - a quiet moment of reflection - looks toward the stands.

HEALANI blows a kiss. MR. G and NAN wave proudly. KENJI stands up and bows.

Paul calls to his Kailua team.

PAUL  
It's time!

As the players circle around him, Paul closes his eyes for a beat - letting the moment swirl over him.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Time to believe... in each other -  
and ourselves.  
(raising his voice)  
All hands in!  
(then)  
One - two - three-

TEAM  
KAILUA!

The players erupt with energy.

Paul beams - soaking in the spirit of community, belonging, 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