

MY HAWAII

By

Cliff Hanger

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CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 -- Purging the Past

{Insert graphic of Lihi'i island here, complete with a small sea plane and a dotted line tracing its path as it circles around the island... ad nauseum.}

A # Ka'puka

(Please note: Ka'puka is no more Hawaiian than Uppa Chucka is Italian. The same may be said of many of the "Hawaiian" words which follow. Truth may be stranger than fiction, but fiction is usually funnier.)

One can only imagine the thrill and exhilaration which swept through Thirty Seven's body when the dashing rogue known only by the mysterious moniker of Cliff boarded her seaplane. Friendly, easy going by nature, almost indecently handsome, graced with a witty personality, bewitching smile, and a devil may care attitude: they had been airborne for a full fifteen minutes before the normally gregarious pilot had worked up the courage to say anything more than the cursory hello when she suddenly blurted out, "Keep the puke on your side of the cabin. You're cleaning that up when we land, you know."

Moan. "How much further?"

"Three hours, Big Guy."

Groan!

Yeah, Thirty Seven could have told you right then and there, Cliff was the one. There was no doubt about it.

None at all.

Nada.

Zip.

Just like what he had left in his stomach.

B # Pi'u (Just like it sounds)

There's a lot of time in a three hour flight for casual conversation. Cliff would have liked to regale the lovely lass sitting next to him and piloting the plane with stories of adventure, perhaps drop the names of a few of his contacts in the State Department, or just sort of explain in a casual offhand manner -- one that would seem natural and not too much like bragging -- how his brother in law had arranged for Cliff to get the Diplomatic Attaché position on Lihi'i as a way of removing Cliff from his couch where he had become a more or less permanent fixture. But sadly, but every time Cliff opened his mouth, words failed him.

"Geez, you're making a mess. Get it into the bag, at least."

"It's got a hole! It's leaking!"

Reaching around behind her, Thirty Seven's hands alighted upon the cooler in which she kept her lunch. Dumping out the contents, she thrust the container towards Cliff.

"Thanks," Cliff managed. Of course he said this instinctively before the stench of rotting tuna fish salad reached his nose.

I mean, when you get right down to it, the aroma didn't help matters, not one little bit.

"Sorry about that."

C # Ao'o Ao'o O'o (another onomatopoeia: a word which in and of itself sounds like it could be Hawaiian)

The trip to Lihi'i lasted slightly longer than eternity. When the island finally came into view, Thirty Seven remarked casually, almost too casually, "You're not going to like this."

Of course, Cliff hadn't liked anything about the trip thus far -- except for perhaps the way Thirty Seven had thrown herself at

him: it was sort of unseemly, really. All the same, there was something about the tone of her voice, something about the way that she said it, or maybe it was simply the words themselves which indicated, he wasn't going to like this -- not one little bit.

“What is it? No, don't tell me,” and then finally curiosity getting the better of him. “Fine. Fine. Tell me.”

“It's windy today.”

That seemed sort of obvious from the way the plane had been rocking back and forth for the past three hours.

“And that means the surf's up.”

A quick view to starboard confirmed this observation that yes indeed, the ocean below was a sheet of foaming whitecaps.

“And that means Dada will be riding the waves.”

“Good to know?” Cliff offered hopefully.

“Which means we'll have to circle around Lihi'i at least once, maybe twice, depending on where the waves are breaking.” And then looking over at Cliff she smiled, sort of cruelly, as she said, “It's going to be bumpy.”

To which, Cliff made the only logical retort.

“That's it, Big Guy. Let it all out.”

D # Pau Nui (Praying for death, basically.)

Cliff prayed for death. He was not a religious man by nature, but if there was a God and said God were in the wish granting mood, Cliff asked for but one small favor: a quick and painless death.

To his consternation, Cliff's prayers were not answered.

But perhaps that is just as well.

E # Pau Nui! Pau Nui! (praying for death, when you really mean it)

Of course, if Cliff had only had the presence of mind, this would have been the perfect time to take in a full aerial

reconnaissance of his future home. At 37.37 miles square -- I believe that's what a curved crescent at 3 miles by 7 miles works out to -- Lihi'i is not that large, and while they waited for Dada to get out of the surf and clear the landing strip, the pair had ample time to circle around the island numerous times.

"You can see Rainbow Falls out the port window," Thirty Seven could be heard to say, and then moments later, "And now it's out the starboard window."

"Port."

"Starboard."

"Port."

"Starboard."

As she said this in her sing song voice, it set up a wonderful sort of rhythm -- accompanied as it was by the rocking of the wings and the sudden changes in altitude which hugging the landscape so adroitly, required.

Needless to say, Thirty Seven was having the time of her life.

But as I may have mentioned earlier, Cliff was far too busy praying for death to notice the playful gleam in her eye.

F # Heiau!

(A religious structure, sort of like a sacrificial pyramidal altar)

"Hold on!"

The advice was not needed. White knuckled, Cliff gripped the armrests as if he was holding on for dear life, as the plane lurched down over the treetops and slammed into the relatively calm waters of the lagoon.

Of course at a hundred yards, the lagoon didn't make much of a runway, and soon the plane was out in the cove...

Heading for the reef...

And the towering waves, which have inspired surfers for countless centuries.

All things consider, Cliff decided it was finally time to close

his eyes. He couldn't have told you why he hadn't thought of it earlier.

G # Pau'ak'ak'ak (Just when you think you're done with all of the ak'aking...)

"Now that's a landing!"

Thirty Seven was quite pleased with herself. The weather report had been bad; ground control had reluctantly approved her flight plan -- citing the hazards of landing in such inclement weather of all things -- but she had made it. She had shown them. "Now, that's piloting!" she exclaimed again.

And then looking over at her passenger, white faced, white knuckled, eyes firmly held shut, she asked full of amazement... and concern, "You missed it? I can't believe you didn't see that. Oh, I'm going to have to do that again!"

It was the revving of the engines as much as anything, that got Cliff's attention. Frantically opening his eyes, he saw Thirty Seven delirious with delight as the seaplane taxied towards the shore.

"You saw that landing, right? Tell me you saw it."

Eyes gleaming -- such happiness, such an inner glow.

"Tell me you saw it! That was incredible, right?"

"You're insane, aren't you?"

Thirty Seven could only nod enthusiastically. It had been her best landing ever. She hoped everybody on the island had seen it.

While Cliff for his part... well, let's just say he was having trouble thinking clearly -- near death experience, and all. And if truth be told, he would feel a little disgusted with himself later. But at the time, all he could do was start laughing, giggling helplessly with relief, as he said what was on his mind, "Amazing. One in a million."

"You think?" Thirty Seven beamed crazily.

"Oh, yeah. I'm certain of it, but there is no way I'm ever getting in a plane with you again."

“That’s OK. You were there during my moment of greatness.”

“You’re insane. You know that, right?”

“Yeah,” Thirty Seven had to agree, and then she made the sort of tactical mistake that impulsive people are so prone to make. Euphoria getting the better of her she undid her seatbelt, climbed over the controls, and gave Cliff a great big lip-smacking kiss.

“Oh! What’s that... taste?”

It truly was Cliff’s turn to laugh.

And Thirty Seven’s turn to be sick.

It wasn’t a pretty sight.

Nope. Not one little bit.

I # Ai’e’au (Not really sure what this one means, but Thirty Seven swears this is what Cliff screamed at this point)

Now some will say, “Cliff, he used to making girls sick,” so he was still thinking clearly.

Others will tell you, “Cliff, he scared the plane crash,” so he was only trying to save himself.”

While still others contend, “What really scared Cliff is that he thinking plane was taking off again.”

But the truth of the matter is: with nerves of steel and as much grace and composure as the situation allowed, Cliff screamed like a ninny, “We’re going to run them over!”

Because you see, the entire population of Lihi’i had gathered on the beach to see what type of man the government of The United States of American was sending them... this time.

J # Kai’a Kai’a (at the waters edge)

As we might have established by now, Thirty Seven was on the whole resourceful, quick, and nibble -- if a bit flighty -- so even though she was feeling under the weather and her heart and mind were otherwise engaged, she reflexively cut the engines and the

seaplane rolled regally up the beach coming to a perfect stop in the middle of the town green: it's usual parking spot.

The three dozen or so onlookers -- call it 37 -- who had gathered for the landing, surrounded the seaplane and gave a great cheer of welcome. But even before they said, "Aloha!" every last one of them knew that landing would be the only thing Thirty Seven would want to talk about for the rest of her stay.

"Did you see that landing? Swooping down over the trees and into the lagoon: it was beautiful."

"That's not all we saw, yeah? You do the kissy-kissy with the new guy."

"Let's stay focused here, Kimo. We were talking about my landing: me zooming over the trees and then touchdown! It felt good. Did it look good?"

"Yeah, yeah. Look good from here. Look like you enjoy yourself. I kiss him myself, but I just ate. No want to make the same mistake you did."

K # Aloha! (aloha, duh)

So this was to be Cliff's new home. Surrounding the plane, laughing and cheering, the locals seemed friendly enough.

Cliff shrugged as he exchanged a glance with Thirty Seven. Then, after straightening his clothes as best he could, Cliff opened the door and jumped to the ground... that last being a bit of a mistake.

Still reeling from the flight, Cliff managed to watch the world spin around once, twice, and then decided it would be best if he viewed the world from his knees... or maybe huddled in a ball.

It was to be an inauspicious beginning.

L # Kak'a Ku! Kak'a Ku! (I think he may be the god of thunder, war, and all that sort of good stuff, giving Cliff his own version of a hearty hello)

“I like this new guy. He know his place.”

“Yeah, he laid back. Take it easy. Just the one step and he decide to lie down, take the rest.”

Moan.

“Hey, he say something. Hey, Thirty Seven, what he say? He speak the strange language.”

“Weird haole accent.”

“Just leave him alone, guys. He’ll be fine. He’s airsick. Just give him an hour or two.”

And then, after smelling the man’s clothes and looking at the gathering clouds in the sky, Kami and Kimo both had to agree:

“That good plan, Thirty Seven.”

“Yeah-yeah. We like it, Thirty Seven. That one good plan.”

Chapter 2 -- The Cleansing Rains

{Island graphic showing sun and a little rain cloud showering over the plane resting in the cove.}

A # Kakahiaka (being a haiku that is full of... kaka)

The phrase Island Time usually brings to mind a certain disregard for punctuality, as if things -- anything -- could be done just as well a little bit later -- be that in another hour, another day, or even another century.

But Island Time, also, refers to when certain things happen. For instance, on the beautiful tropical island of Lihi’i, the sun rises above the horizon at 6AM each and every day. It’s common knowledge. It’s a fact. It’s simply the way things are. And if you wanted to, you could set your watch by it.

Of course if you did, you might find that your watch was already off a little by the time 9AM eventually rolled around, which in itself, probably explains why no one on the island ever wears a watch.

B # # # Aloha Awakea (Good waking ups... or, er, morning)

By convention and tradition, 9AM on Lihi'i is defined as the moment when the first rays of morning sunshine finally arrive on the western side of the island -- that is the leeward side. At first glance this might not seem like such an ambiguous measure of time, but one must realize that those "first rays of morning sunshine" peek over the Kala and the Pe'la'u's at vastly different times depending on -- exactly -- where one is standing and what is expected of them when the morning finally arrives.

In fact, if one chooses their location properly, the morning may be over before it has ever begun.

C # # # Aloha Au'inala (Good a'noon'a)

To appreciate this fact completely and thoroughly, one must understand that 9AM is when breakfast is served at The Grand Lihi'i Hotel... something to which the guests -- quite understandably -- look forward, but which the staff -- also, quite understandably -- do not.

The same can be said of Father Cross's school. Being a morning person by nature, at 9AM Father Cross is eager to start the day's lessons, while his students -- if he has any, at that most ungodly of hours -- are not.

9AM is, also, when anyone on the island who has been foolish enough to contract with another for a "full day's labor" may expect their workers to arrive. I say foolish, of course, because only a fool would expect anyone to arrive at that time.

And perhaps most significantly, 9AM is when Cliff, the attaché, is expected to man his radio. Not that he gets a lot of transmissions, mind you, at any hour, but I think you get the idea.

Which is just another way of saying that in the middle of the week, it is not altogether uncommon for half of the island's residents to spend the morning lounging around the lagoon and huddling in the shade of Pe'la'u where the sun's morning rays

won't fall until shortly before noon... which conveniently enough, is when "lunch" typically begins.

D # # # Lihi'i Hana Ho (Lihi'i My Island Home)

Noon, or "lunch" as it is called on Lihi'i, is that period of time when the shadows are the shortest. On a good day, this swath of time can be stretched out to two or three hours or longer... as everyone stops what they are doing to rest in the shade... even if all one has been doing until that point has been resting in the shade. Coincidentally, this is more or less when Thirty Seven landed her seaplane and Cliff originally arrived on the island.

I mention this not because I am obsessed with time, but because on that first day, Cliff would have been happy to sleep past 6PM: this being when the sun retreats from the eastern (or what is more commonly referred to as the windward) side of the island. This is a point of reference, which I might add, that is of absolutely no use to anyone on the leeward side of the island. Thus 6PM usually passes without notice.

And having slept past 6PM, Cliff would most assuredly have continued to sleep until 8PM: a time which is marked by the setting sun and its majestic display of reds, yellows, and oranges.

But unfortunately, as far as Cliff's nap on that first day would go, smack dab in the middle of the afternoon there occurs what is arguably the most important time marker of all on Lihi'i: 3PM, when work is over for the day, school ends, and when the daily rains begin.

Which, I suppose, is a rather long winded way of saying, everyone knew when Cliff finally awoke from his nap. It was three o'clock. Everyone knew this, because it had begun to rain -- quite heavily.

E # Macha Ua (Mucho rain, Senior Haole)

Of course, as he lay on the beach, Cliff didn't actually know what time it was, and for what seemed like the longest of times to the others, he also didn't realize it was raining.

"He like the plant."

"You sure you no kill him, Thirty Seven?"

"Cliff. Cliff! Wake up!"

Startled, Cliff stood up!

Suddenly!

And promptly hit his head on the outstretched wing of the plane where he had been resting all afternoon, immediately crumpling to the ground, once more.

It probably looked funnier than it sounds -- or than it felt -- but the villagers -- the residents of Lihi'i seemed determined to look on the bright side -- or at least, funny side -- of everything.

"He go down like the sack of potatoes."

"He good man for you Thirty Seven. He always down on his knees. You get along with him real good."

F # Au Ia' Oe (which I'm pretty sure means love in any language)

Believe it or not -- and personally I find it incredibly hard to believe; so in the end, she probably just wasn't being honest with herself -- Thirty Seven didn't like the idea of being linked with this new man. It wasn't that she disliked him -- well there had been that puke filled flight, that had been no picnic. But no, it wasn't a dislike; it wasn't a hate. There simply wasn't any love... or so, she would have you believe.

But when Cliff went down, she went running right over, her heart stuck in her throat like a lump, full of worry and concern.

"Shoot! I don't have insurance! Come on! Don't do this to me! Get up! Come on! Walk it off! Walk it off!"

G # Meli (a word so sweet it melts in your mouth)

“Wow! It’s really raining.”

Cracka-Boom!

“Wow! Cool!”

“Don’t try to talk. You hit your head just now, honey,” darling, sweeti-pie, the love of my life, my heart’s one true delight, my passion, my desire, my reason de existence, and so on.

Subsequently and in an effort to hide her true feelings, Thirty Seven would start calling everyone on the island honey. I suppose, it takes some girls a long time to admit their true feelings -- even to themselves.

H # Kio’ea (Confused water. As in, Eh? Kio? What you talking about? You been drinking Auntie’s medicine again?)

In a soothing voice full of concern -- you know, once you got past the harsh outer gruffness -- Thirty Seven asked Cliff, “Are you OK? Can you walk?” as she led him towards the lagoon.

“Don’t let her take you into the lagoon, New Guy.”

“His name’s Cliff.”

“Don’t let her take you into the lagoon, New Guy Cliff.”

“Yeah-yeah. That’s how we lost the last guy. Thirty Seven hit him on the head, dragged him into the lagoon, and we never see the poor guy ever again.”

“That’s OK,” Cliff said dreamily. “All I want to know is whether he had a smile on his face or not when he went,” because you know, that’s like a pretty important detail.

But Thirty Seven was not amused... or at least, she pretended not to be amused because (and I think it bears noting), she never did let go of the -- ruggedly handsome -- newcomer’s body as she half-carried, half cradled his poor, tired, and weary body all of the way to the lagoon. Clearly, love was in the air.

I # Ki’o La La (bad man go bye-bye, to reject, as in flushing down the drain)

“Hey, why you drag New Guy...”

“We’ve already been over this, Kimo. His name is Cliff.”

“So, why you drag the New Guy Cliff into the lagoon anyway, Thirty Seven?”

“To wash his clothes.”

“Hey, that good idea, Thirty Seven. We going to say something about the stink, but we don’t want to be rude. This new guy really smell.”

“You know,” Cliff observed as he looked around at the others preparing for a communal swim, “this beach appears to be clothing optional. So, whatever you’re about, Pretty Lady, might be easier if we both got undressed.”

“I think you’re better,” Thirty Seven replied as she dropped her charge, causing him to dip under the water... not so much like the aforementioned sack of potatoes, but more like a rock that was sinking quickly and staying down for the count.

Which just goes to show, your mother was right: it is best to wait at least 45 minutes after receiving a nasty blow to the head before going back in the water.

J # U’ala Awa’awa (and now it’s sweet potato beer time, or something like that)

Believe it or not, Cliff doesn’t actually remember much about that first day, after that.

“This the guy they send to help us? First, he sleep all day. Now he out cold. Sleep all night. How he supposed to help us? This guy can’t even stand on his own.”

“Just help me carry him somewhere, Kimo?”

“Where?”

“Hey, Kami. Looks like you’ve got yourself a customer.”

“He a paying customer? I got the rule about only taking paying customers.”

“That’s between the two of you.”

To clarify issues, at this point Cliff was happy to point out, “I’ll be happy to pay you in daffodils Tuesday for a hamburger today.”

“Who knows, Kami? Maybe he’s got life insurance and you’ll get lucky.” Obviously in this time of crisis, Thirty Seven was desperately trying to keep her grief check. Anyone could tell, she’d be unable to sleep a wink that night.

“You want to grab a beer or something, Kimo?”

“Yeah-yeah, sure. That is, if you’re buying, Thirty Seven.”

Chapter 3 -- And Everyone Knows She’s Misty... er, I mean, Pe’la

{Graphic of a ghostly apparition hanging over the island... perhaps more so towards Lapahoihoi Point than anywhere else.}

A # Mo’ Kaha’ul (Being a wet dream, which this isn’t; but hey, a guy -- or a girl -- can always hope.)

It should come as no surprise that Cliff was dreaming. In well crafted interpretive fiction (Like this is!) a dream sequence follows a blow to the head like night follows day... or should that be day follows night?

Eh, I guess I can let you figure that out.

The point is, Cliff was dreaming. And in said dream he was being carried around, over, and through the island of Lihi’i by a puff of volcanic smoke -- vog, if you will.

And all in all, not a bad gig if you can get it.

B # Le’le’le (As in, your lips are moving and I hear you talking, etc. Also, likened unto the fluttering of a butterfly.)

Cliff knew he was flying over the island of Lihi’i because he had just taken a stomach lurching flight over the same landscape mere hours before. In fact, it would be the harrowing nature of

that experience which certain others (his sister and brother-in-law to name just a few) would use to explain why the details incorporated into his dream seemed so accurate and real.

Others (mainly his direct supervisor), felt that the basis for the dream originated in the numerous hours Cliff had spent pouring over countless maps, charts, and dossiers in preparation for his assignment to Lihi'i.

But the most vocal contingent of observers (being the residents of Lihi'i themselves, and therefore those most likely to know the TRUTH of the matter); well, once they learned of the dream, they were more than happy to explain that the reason Cliff noted so many details about the island in his dream that he hadn't been consciously aware of before was because it had been the Goddess, herself, who had cradled Cliff in her arms; and as anyone who has ever made her a sacrifice knows, she's sort of a stickler for details. Besides, she's got a bit of an ego and just plain enjoys showing off her creation.

C # Ho'oki Oki (Being a thing or occurrence which you may believe personally, but which others, quite reasonably, do not.)

Now, the last thing I want to do is come off like some sort of overbearing narrator; but I was there during the dream, and you weren't; so even if you don't believe that I was escorted around the island and welcomed personally to these fair shores by an apparition who will later be revealed to be the Goddess Pe'la herself, I still think it would only be polite if you were to pretend to believe me... or at least keep your opinion to yourself till the end of the narrative and not ruin it for everyone else.

D # I'nam'o Po (Being the type of dream this is... if we ever get to it. Once again, it's not erotic. But for many, it's considered to be even better.)

Now, Cliff liked to consider himself a connoisseur of dreams.

And if the truth be known, it was probably one of the things he did best. So, he had a certain amount of experience with these things; and immediately upon entering the spirit realm, he realized that it would best if he simply laid back, went with the flow, and let the smoke-like apparition that was cradling him in its arms carry him wherever it would: across the back side of the island, down hidden lava tubes, over Pela'ku Falls, to the depths of the lagoon; and then, down the sandy peninsula, weaving past the empty thatched huts of the village towards Lapahoehoe Point -- the oldest part of island, which for the most, has washed away and sunk into the ocean.

“Why isn't anyone else about,” Cliff asked at one point, probably as they passed through the village.

“They're there, but you can't see them; nor they you,” was the apparition's simple explanation. “You are not one of them... not yet. First you need a name -- a real name, a true name, a Hawaiian name.”

Normally, that would have sounded fine and dandy to Cliff; he liked nicknames... as his current moniker might suggest. But there was something about the giant, oversized, larger than life, truly enormous obsidian knife that had suddenly materialized from out of no where and which hung in the air before him, which sort of concerned him.

“Um, wait a second, here,” he might have tried to say.

But the spirit more or less ignored him. “You shall be called Kala'ku,” the spirit decreed with much solemnity. But then, after thinking on the matter a moment longer, added, “or maybe, Kalala'ku, because, you know, you're way more la'la than the rest.”

E ### Pe'la (Just fulfilling prophesy here, guys. No need to be breaking out the... toys.)

Probably because Cliff didn't know any better, wasn't up on that whole Spirit World etiquette thing, or perhaps because being

called 'la'la' by a plume of smoke had somehow managed to rile his ire (I mean, who did this spirit think it was, anyway, calling him la'la?), Cliff had the effrontery to ask the Goddess, who was slowly forming out of the mist before him, "So, what's your name, anyhow?"

On the surface the Goddess didn't seem all that troubled by the question or the break in etiquette that it implied. She merely said something along the lines of, "Eh, you'd just say it wrong, anyhow." But you could tell that underneath it all, the Goddess was sort of annoyed -- probably because she'd had to do another one of these welcoming ceremonies, and so soon! Didn't she just do this same thing like only forty years ago?

The point is, she was a Goddess, so who knows exactly what she was thinking. But one thing Cliff can tell you for sure is that without any further ado, this Goddess (whoever she was, but the smart money's on Pe'la) grabbed hold of that great big, gigantic, overly large obsidian knife blade of hers and made a bloody gash down the side of Cliff's leg.

"OUCH!"

Or at least for the love of Pe'la ('cause you know how you sometimes get these things wrong in the Spirit World), what Cliff hoped was his leg!

F # Kuku'lulu

(Being the Hawaiian word for sure, right, whatever: we believe you, Haole.)

Being a bloody gash that extended the entire length of his thigh, the wound was sort of painful, and Cliff awoke with a start.

"OW! Ouch! Oh, that smarts."

And just as sure as a day follows night or a dream sequence follows a traumatic, life threatening injury to the head, Cliff awoke from his visit to the Spirit World to find that the injury he had sustained there was real.

Now on rare occasions, Kami and the rest might tell you that

Cliff was bleeding (like profusely) when they'd pulled him out of the lagoon the night before. But since the islanders as a whole were (and still are) a superstitious lot -- believing in such things as ghosts, spirit ancestors, and a divine presence -- clearly their judgment and powers of observation were (and still are) not to be trusted.

Besides, if Cliff had actually been bleeding "profusely" when they pulled him out of the lagoon, they would have bandaged him up before leaving him for the night in some broom closet, right?

I said, right?

"Um, yeah. Cliff's got the good point there, guys. I think maybe that cut on his leg happened at night... Spirit World, whatever you say, Cliff."

G # Ku

(Yeah, wouldn't you like to know)

Of course, at that moment, all of this was neither here nor there, for Cliff had more pressing matters on his mind. He knew what the word Kala meant... or at least, where it had come from. The only antenna on the island was mounted on top of Kala: the tallest peak on the island -- named after the God of tourists, Haoles, and governmental attachés. It made a sort of sense that he would have the name of his patron saint included within his own.

So, that just left the matter of word 'ku.

And just on the outside chance that 'ku meant "sacrificial lamb" or something like that, Cliff thought it might be best to keep the dream under wraps for the time being.

H # He'a

(As in "Hey'a, haole, we'a gonna sacrifice you now." So um, if that wasn't clear, Kaha'he'a is bad a name to get saddled with in the Spirit World. You definitely don't to be named that. Whereas, Kalala'ku isn't bad, it's actually sort of good. I'm just telling you that now, because you know, I didn't want there to be any tension

about that. This here is a happy story. No worries. Cliff lives to the end... and with any luck, and then some.)

Anyhow, having received his island name, Cliff was pretty sure that the islanders would finally notice him for the first time and see him for who he really was.

Not that he had been, you know, inconspicuous or anything, thus far.

Chapter 4 - Unpacking

{Graphic of shirts blowing away from the island on a gentle breeze.}

Welcome Home

U'ku!

(Get it off! Get it off! Get it off! Uku being bedlice, cocky roaches, and similar creatures of a generally icky nature... of which Lihi'i is decidedly free.)

Having awoken in the most premier of hotel suites that The Grand Lihi'i Hotel had to offer -- a moldy cot, wedged in the supply closet, overlooking the drainage basin -- Cliff quickly surmised that room service was probably out of the question. So in search of morning cup of brew -- coffee, if you will -- he stumbled out of bed, opened the door, and was promptly blinded by the glaring noonday sun.

Holo'aloHa

(To travel in friendship... as in Kimo and Kami -- also known in these parts as Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, but not to their faces -- travel through this life in friendship.)

As he stood there, Kimo -- the big one, the really big one, the one who if he was hollow, you could fit a family of four inside of... comfortably -- said jovially, "Hey, look. He finally up."

Cliff recognized the voice. He also recognized the second squeakier, rat-like voice that echoed the first, a voice that could only belong to Kami. Kami, the Chinaman, was much-much... much-much... much-much smaller than Kimo. But if one were to describe Kami, first and foremost one would have to mention that he was a businessman. Kami was the proprietor of almost everything worth being proprietor of on the small island of Lihi'i. He ran the hotel, the bar, the restaurant, and the general store. In fact, if he could have somehow gotten hold of the ice-machine in the attaché's office or installed a radio antenna of his own, it probably wouldn't have taken him but a week to own the rest of the island complete: lock, stock, and barrel.

Unfortunately, he didn't own the ice machine and was dependent upon the residing attaché for use of the antenna in receiving reservations from prospective guests. All in all, this would probably explain his desire to get off on the right foot with Cliff.

"It about time you wake up, new guy. You sleep past noon, I have to charge you for second night."

Ah, Kami. You just have to love the guy. He's all heart.

Pa'pa'pa'pale

(A hat... of sorts. To say it right, you might want to think back to those Chia Pet commercials of yesteryear.)

For the moment, the hotel tab could wait, because as his eyes adjusted to the light, Cliff noticed that his belongings had been lovingly unpacked and laid out on the town green. Even as he watched, the trade winds suddenly picked-up and carried his good shirts into the trees.

Luckily, there was no danger of his under-shorts blowing away any time soon as these were being utilized by the Lani children in an impromptu game of I've Got More Shorts On My Head Than Anyone Else with all seven of the children competing for first place.

Hoa'wahine

(Thirty Seven: it's not just a name, it's an aberration. Don't get me wrong, a cute aberration, but an aberration nonetheless.)

"What are you doing with my stuff?"

"We go through."

"Yeah, I think that obvious, new guy."

"We see what kind of attaché you going to be by what you bring."

And then noticing the anger rising in Cliff's eyes and getting ready to boil over, Kami decided it would be best to explain the situation more thoroughly, "It Thirty Seven's idea. You should talk to her."

U'la'la'la

(As in, name, rank, and Patient ID#37-7337: you'll get nothing more out of me.) #

Cliff was beginning to get a better picture of who this Thirty Seven person was. Clearly, she was a troublemaking escapee from the local insane asylum -- cleverly packaged as an unbelievably hot girl with the prettiest blue eyes you ever did see.

Cliff felt it would be best to let her explain.

Yes, that would be best: wait and let her explain.

That's right, let her explain...

"Well!"

"You brought books."

"Yes," Cliff had, in fact, brought a book or two along.

"You didn't tear out the 37th page of each one before you packed. That's why things went so bad yesterday."

Nothing to do with your flying into inclement weather?

"I suppose it's my fault. I should have checked your luggage before I took off."

Well, at least you're taking some responsibility for the fiasco.

“You better be more careful with your passengers next time, Thirty Seven,” Kimo chimed in.

“Yeah, next time you check bags first,” Kami echoed.

And as for Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum, the less said about them for the moment the better.

Hei’he’he’anna

(A sacrifice made to the Gods of Dementia. The fact that [Crazy] Anne’s name (a resident to which you will be introduced later) is contained within the word is merely a coincidence, I assure you.)

There really wasn’t much for Cliff to do. Most of the damage had been done. Besides, the gleam in Thirty Seven eyes was sort of captivating -- in that charming way so many psychotics have. So, he just sort of stood there and watched as she tore the last of the ill-numbered pages (#37) out of his books and set the pile of crumpled pages on fire.

Needless to say, the fire danced in her eyes as you might expect that it would as Thirty Seven smiled -- just like a little girl who was used setting fire to other people’s property might smile.

“Um, yeah, right. So, that’s settled. Tell me, is my underwear possessed by the demons of bad luck, too?”

“I would hope not,” Thirty Seven smirked. “Nani’s! Time to pack it up! All of you! And all of it!”

Crazy and authoritative: Thirty Seven apparently ran a tight ship. You couldn’t really ask for anything else 3,000 miles from the middle of nowhere.

Pa’pa’pa Lepo

(Lepo (a slang word, derived from the leper colonies of old): meaning dirty or unclean. And, I think we all know what pa’pa’pa means by now.)

Luckily, Cliff hadn’t packed all that much, and so it hadn’t

taken that long to track down all the shirts blowing about in the breeze. And when the pair of suitcases he had brought along had been packed back up more or less as they had been -- with the addition of a few handfuls of dirt -- Thirty Seven said rather charitably and therefore -- up to this point, at least -- rather uncharacteristically, "I'll help you carry those up the hill."

Cliff didn't really need the help. And since there was only one road leading out of town -- and he already knew that his cabin was at the end of it -- he didn't really need anyone to show him the way. But if Thirty Seven said she wanted to make sure he was tucked in all comfy like, who was he to say no.

Um, besides, have I mentioned the psychotic gleam in her eyes? Best not to say no to a pair of eyes like that. When they want something, they want it. And apparently, what they wanted was Cliff... and how.

Pua'a Luau

(Luau's aren't named after pigs, you know, they're named after the taro plant. But unfortunately for them, most pigs are, in fact, named after luaus. Thus, may they be forever reminded of their fate.)

You could tell that Thirty Seven was trying to choose her words carefully. To declare her love, now? To throw herself at this newcomer's feet? Beg for his love? His admiration? His caress? His attention?

Or to simply gut him like a stuffed pig and be done with it?

After careful reflection, Thirty Seven chose the latter.

Halfway up the hill where the attaché's cabin stood (ingeniously and prophetically named Cliff House even before Cliff had arrived), Thirty Seven put down the suitcase that she had been carrying and drew the big bowie knife that she always kept on her person -- presumably for this very purpose -- and said to Cliff in such a way that it could only be taken as a threat, "If you so much as touch Lihi, I'll kill you. So help me God, I'll hunt you

down, and gut you like a pig. You won't be able to hide. This island is only so big."

Understandably, Cliff felt it would be best if he kept on walking and put as much distance between himself and this crazy woman as soon as possible. "It's good to know that Lihi has friends, you know, that, like, care about her so much."

"I'm not kidding."

"Neither am I. Oh, but that brings up an important point. We should make a date or something, so you can drop by and see whether I need gutting or not. I think I'm going to be pretty busy this week," unpacking, doing laundry, cleaning my pa'pa'pa's, and all that, "but come Saturday night, I'm all yours."

"I'm not kidding."

"But for some reason, you continue to think that I am?"

He would have told her that she looked cute when she got angry at this juncture, as well. But seeing as how she hadn't put the knife away just yet, for some reason, that didn't seem like such a good idea.

Chapter 5 - The Cliff House... a social club and better known as the Attaché café.

{Map of island with exaggerated picture of the Cliff House highlighted: standing on stilts, overlooking the cove, way up high on the mountain, facing the sunset.}

Moe

(It's what you sleep on. It's also this guy I used to know. He did great Three Stooges impressions, "Hey, Moe!" "A wise guy, huh?")

"Your bed, her bed," Thirty Seven explained as she pointed to the small army surplus cot and the threadbare couch respectively. "Got it?"

"No fair! Why does she get the couch?" Cliff pouted.

"I like the couch," Lihi said suddenly despite herself.

“You’re not going to take my couch away from me, are you?”

Thirty Seven was probably going to say something -- you know, something witty... or more likely violent -- but Cliff was in his element here and so she never got the chance. “You’re not going to be here to protect her all the time, Thirty Seven. So if Lihi wants that couch, she’s going to have to earn it,” Cliff explained as he eyed the child all crazy like -- you know, sort of like how Thirty Seven might. “They say you’re smart, kid, real smart. If you want that couch, you’re going to have to riddle me this. What’s the capital of Oingo Boingo?”

“There’s no such place,” Lihi said defiantly. I mean, as if she knew.

“But if there was?”

Yeah, Cliff had her on the ropes with that one, and she knew it. Scrunching her face up, as if the answer could be found in some corner of her mind if only she squeezed hard enough, the solution suddenly came to Lihi. “Well, most folks think it’s Porky Pig, but he’s the mayor, and before the revolution it was Hoag, but these days they call it Shepard’s Pie.”

“You sure about that? Shepard’s Pie?”

“Oh yeah, Shepard’s Pie, usually pronounced in the local dialect as a sort of Snort-Snort Grunt-Grunt.”

“Yeah, you got lucky this time, kid.”

“OK. Now it’s my turn. What’s the...”

“Whoah there! What do you mean, your turn? I’m don’t think that’s the way this game is played, missy.”

“I’m pretty sure it is,” Thirty Seven insisted.

“Oh, I can see how it’s going to be: the women folk ganging up on the only guy in the room. Well, you can keep your couch then, Lihi, and good riddance to it. I like these cots,” Cliff said as he plopped his suitcase down on the sturdily constructed contraption and watched it collapse to the floor, raising a puff of dust in the process.

Luau

(A feast thrown in celebration of something... perhaps the fact that the locals haven't killed you, not yet.)

Thirty Seven had wanted to stay. You could see it in her eyes. But she had a business to run, and she was already a day behind schedule in ferrying the married couple staying at the hotel off the island. She couldn't afford to stay another night. So before Cliff could offer her a glass of water -- assuming he had water to offer -- or a pudding pack from the C-rations on which he was expected to live, Thirty Seven was out the door and down the hill.

"Don't worry. She'll be back," Lihi said from behind Cliff as he watched her captivating form disappear from view.

"Next Saturday, you think?" Cliff asked hopefully.

"I don't know," Lihi replied easily. "Is that when you're planning on throwing your luau?"

Ninja and Poke

(Ninja is actually a Japanese word. If you are unfamiliar with it, ask any Japanese boy that you happen to see and they'll be happy to explain its meaning. Poke, on the other hand, is a dish comprised of raw tuna, salt, seaweed, and onion. Made properly, it tastes great. Let it sit on the table for a day before you eat it, and it will kill you faster than a ninja assassin in the dark of the night.)

Cliff would have liked to learn more about this luau he was supposed to be hosting, but at that point two young boys (coincidentally named Ninja and Poke) ran through the doorway just beating the three o'clock rains.

The young boys didn't bother to say hello, and immediately sat down on Lihi's couch, just like they owned the place or something, which seeing as how they were the only ones on the island who knew how to work the radio, they basically did.

Nui Kua'ana

(Literally, Big Brother. One could have simply said Kimo

and left it at that, but he's really more of an uncle/father... and not The Big Brother we are alluding to.)

As Ninja and Poke busied themselves with the radio, Cliff warned the boys, "Be careful what you dial in. Remember, Big Brother is watching you."

But the reference was lost on the boys.

Besides, it simply wasn't true. I mean, Big Brother would have liked to have been watching the boys, but the two young lads had been very successful in covering their tracks thus far; and in fact, had yet to write a single entry in the radio log. Needless to say, this, more than anything else, was why Big Brother was so interested in keeping track of their activities in the first place.

A'popo'popo Lau'lau

(Being the opposite of a sense of urgency. There are lots of words in the Hawaiian language that convey this general concept. Eskimos are supposed to have something like three thousand words for snow. Well, Hawaiians have just as many for 'I don't feel the same urgency about this as you do' or 'That's your problem, haole, not mine.')

Lihi seemed to be a bit more concerned about the aforementioned invasion of privacy than the pair of young hooligans the comment had been directed towards. "Is Big Brother really watching us?"

"Yep," Cliff replied easily. "That's why I know you're so smart. I know what correspondence courses you've been taking. But Ninja and Poke, they might even be smarter, because nobody has the slightest idea what they've been up to."

"Boy stuff," Lihi advised with a smirk.

"Yeah, well that is the odds on bet."

"So, what are you going to do about it?"

"Me? Nothing. I haven't even unpacked yet."

"You only have two suitcases," Lihi pointed out.

“Yeah,” Cliff agreed mischievously. “It could take me a while.”

“Good idea,” Lihi accented. “No one will bug you about a luau as long as you’re unpacking.”

“Because it would be rude?”

“Yeah.”

Needless to say, after that little bit of insight, Cliff took even longer to unpack than might have otherwise been the case. Besides, before you throw a party, you want to know who you’re throwing it for, right?

6 - Lihi Revealed!!! Hot-cha-cha!!!

{Graphic of island, hula dancers on the shore welcoming arriving flotilla of boats with one lone canoe heads off to sea, while a young girl can be seen in the window of Cliff House, busy reading a book, unaware of the rest.}

Hi’a Moe Iki

(Hi, ya, Moe. Long time no see. Since you already know Moe is the Hawaiian word for bed, I’m pretty sure you can figure out the rest.)

Having been up for an hour and a half, Cliff decided to take a nap. And in no time, he was dreaming again.

Well, not so much dreaming as pretending to dream.

Call it meditating.

Call it staring at the back of his eyelids.

Call it listening to the breeze whistle through the trees as his mind slowly wandered away.

“Call it whatever you want,” the old lady sitting on the edge of his cot remarked impatiently. “Just get on with it.”

“I’m setting the mood,” Cliff retorted.

“You’re putting me to sleep, that’s what you’re doing.”

And believe it or not, that was more or less the point.

B # I'noa Kapa'kapa

(By any other name, a rose is still a rose... but if you choose to call it something else, not as many people will know who or what you are talking about.)

The mist was back, she had formed around Cliff as he slept and taken the form of an old woman. This is how Pe'la, the Goddess of the Volcano, most often chose to reveal herself to Cliff. And incidentally was one of Pe'le's most popular forms as well.

“Oh, don't you even dare mention me and that woman in the same breath. We were best friends as kids, yeah. Passed notes to each other in school, giggled at the boys, shared our lunches, and that sort of thing. BFFL: best friends for life, yeah? Well, phoeey! Does Miss Big Shot ever call? No. She's too busy for that. Big condo in Waikiki. National park named in her honor. And me...”

“Yeah, and you. You just rule over an island paradise.”

“Yeah, well, a girl does what she can with the hand she's dealt.”

C # Ike'hu

(Anyhow, so what are we doing next? Huh? You're not going to sleep, are you? How can you sleep? I don't feel like sleeping. Are you tired? I'm not tired. How can you be tired?)

The point is, Cliff tried to sleep.

While Pe'la talked to him in his sleep. “I'm not really that tired. It's three in the afternoon. Who sleeps at three?”

Cliff did. Cliff does. Cliff would have.

But as he tried, the old lady turned into a mist, lifted him up, and carried him up, over, and through, the waters of life (better known as Kia) and back in time to the moment of Lihi's birth.

“Um, on second thought, you don't want to see that. It's kinda messy.”

Mele Ka'i

(The rowers row, the chanters chant, and time slips silently by.)

Lihi was born into a time of flux, a time of rebirth, and a time of cultural renaissance and pride. The people of Hawaii returned to the sea in droves as they attempted to reestablish contact with their past.

Join them, if you will, floating weightless over the ocean, enjoying the cool sea breeze.

Let the sound of their chants and drums come to you, roll over you, as you let the procession of canoes drift by.

As they do, try to decipher the words to their chant... not that I have the slightest idea what these ghostly rowers are saying. But hey, maybe you speak 'a da language and have the gift. Who knows, maybe you do.

Holo'ka'lihi

(Traveling to a distant shore, far from the land of one's birth... as in, Lihi does this.)

In our vision, night turns to day; and we join a lone canoe, a straggler who has lagged behind, desperately struggling to catch up with the rest.

It is a big canoe, one of those outriggers made for long voyages on the open ocean. And upon it sit many rowers, many paddlers, but we only care about the one.

Sitting in the stern, steering the boat, a bronze skinned, well muscled man, glistens with sweat under the noonday sun. The man looks vaguely like Dada... or Mano may have looked in their youth, which considering the dissimilarity between the two is of absolutely no help in identifying our man.

But this should come as no surprise, for soon enough this stranger will disappear completely from our story. He is of absolutely no importance... to me. It is the girl who sits next to him that matters. She is Lihi at six weeks old, busy reading Moby

Dick. For, she was -- and continues to be -- a precocious child.

Kohala No'ku?

(Why doesn't anyone on Lihi'i have a whale as their aumakua? Their totem animal? Their spirit guide?)

We are still in the vision, for all of this happened a dozen odd years ago... and if that didn't clue you in, then maybe the fact that Lihi did not learn to read books such as Moby Dick until she was two and a half old and out of diapers, should have been some kind of hint, but no matter.

The girl puts down the book she is reading and asks the man sitting next to her, who is presumably her father, but at this point, who really knows, "Why doesn't anyone we know have a whale as their aumakua."

The man did not know the answer right off hand, so he closes his eyes to consult his conscious. When he finally opens them he say, "Long ago, there were no whales in Hawaii. But the white man was hunting them to extinction in their home to the north, so the whales ran away seeking shelter... which they eventually found in these waters."

"I still don't understand."

"Think about it. Why would anyone choose as their aumakua the creature who led the haoles to us?"

"Oh, I see. Are the white devils really that bad?"

"Worse."

Maia'ku Na'kao

(Young grasshopper, shortly you will be tested on the ways of old. So, see if you can divine the meaning of the words above from the passage below.)

It is a pity that the only memory Lihi has of her father revolves around anger. It is quite tragic, for anger is no replacement for love.

But still, it cannot be denied that anger is the only memory she has.

Let the vision continue on; let Lihi turn a page in her book; let the world turn over and fold back upon itself; let day become night as stars fill the sky and paddlers steady strokes carry them quietly onward.

As he points to the stars that make up Orion, Lihi's father says, "That's Maia'ku, there. And next to him is his dog Na'kao. They are hunting. They are always hunting, on the chase... just like your father."

"What are they hunting?"

"Pigs mostly, sometimes haoles."

Like I said, not a happy memory, but the only memory of her father that Lihi has, the only memory she has to honor...

Hano Makua Kane

I suppose things might have stayed that way, Lihi might have stayed that way, if things had turned out differently for her, if she hadn't found so much love on Lihi'i.

But just because the anger is gone, does not mean it is forgotten... not completely.

One must always honor their ancestors... Hano Makua Kane.

Hana Ho

(Being the name of both the reef and the cove located on the leeward side of Lihi'i. If paradise had a name, this might well be it.)

Back in the boat, in the still of the night, the canoe surges over the reef: Hana Ho. As it does, the rowers give a cheer and ride the waves to shore where they are welcomed by a troop of hula dancers bearing gifts of food, wine, and song. For a celebration is taking place on Lihi'i, a meeting of the tribes.

"This is where he left her," Pe'la advises Cliff from where

they stand knee deep in water, at the edge of vision, by the shore. “Some might tell you that he stayed, enjoyed the luau, and got so drunk that he simply forgot her when he left, forgot where he left her, or that he had brought her at all. But that wasn’t the case. He dropped her off, put her in the hands of another, ‘Just for a second,’ and slipped away into the night as fast as possible. Stole the canoe he came in on and was on his way. No one knew where he went... because from the beginning, no one knew who he was.”

Auntie

(Being pidgin for any older female for whom one feels a bond. No genetic link need necessarily be involved.)

You can watch if you like as the vision continues, the girl child getting passed around from woman to woman, each taking their turn, holding her close, smiling into the young child’s face, seeing if she was the one.

“She has your eyes.”

“Mama?”

No, not her mama. But a smile, a connection. And when there is no one else, sometimes that is enough.

J # Hou O’hana

(Literally, a new family, a new home.)

“Where’s your mama, little girl?”

“She’s just a baby, Kimo. She can’t talk.”

“She come with book. She read. So, maybe she talk.

Where’s your mama, little girl?”

“She’s gone.”

“Where?”

And a hand pointing toward the ocean, over the ocean, “Kia take her.”

“And your father?”

With eyes looking to the stars, “Off to distant horizon,

hunting with Maia'ku.”

“OK, maybe you stay. You be good girl?”

“I no eat too much.”

“Eet, OK. You eat all you want, child,” Kimo laughs as he pats his belly, “and read, too, if you want. Maybe you find where everyone go.”

Kiu

(An international man of mystery? Or an island girl with a private agenda? Secret... Agent Girl! Secret... Agent Girl!
They've taken away your father, and given you an attaché's home!)

From there the years quickly speed by. Lihi grows older and finds that the corner of the island she likes best is the one with the best window to the outside world... the one with the newspapers, magazines, radios, reports, and that most newfangled of gadgets, a rotary phone.

“You look after Lihi for awhile, Mrs. Harrison?”

“Sure-sure, Sarah. You just leave her here, no worries.”

And awhile more or less became always, with Lihi never bothering to go home, sleeping on the Harrison's couch, answering the attaché's incoming dispatches, typing reports, running errands... and perhaps far more importantly, getting a first class education into the inner workings of that vast governmental bureaucracy which is otherwise known as the grand ole US of A.

Luhi

(A word that looks suspiciously close to Lihi, if you ask me. This is how Lihi frequently feels after conversing with haoles and their nonsensical ways... or maybe that's just how she feels after having a stimulating discussion with Cliff: tired, weary, and/or mentally exhausted.)

In a dream vision such as this (perhaps, most especially in a dream vision such as this), Lihi would be the first to tell you,

which is to say, she would be the first to tell Cliff, “That’s not how it happened. You got your facts all wrong. First of all, Kimo and Sarah agreed to raise me; she’s my aunt, my real aunt. And secondly, the Harrison’s left the island a good 15 years before I was even born.”

“Oh, yeah,” Cliff retorts, sort of indignantly, if less than articulately. I mean, seeing as how his facts came straight from Pe’la’s lips, he’s pretty sure that his information is spot-on. Besides, if this is all still part of his vision, then that meant he’s still dreaming; and if you can’t be right in your own dream, when can you be right?

O’pule’pule

(As in I think you’re pulling my leg, you crazy haole, you.)

A while back, before the section break, word of the day, etc. Lihi had said something that some (i.e. Cliff) might think required a comeback or bit of witty repartee.

So at this point, having stalled long enough, Cliff retorts with a clever, “Uh-huh? Oh, yeah.” And then, having decided that he has made his point and taught Lihi to respect her elders, continues on with, “Well then, if that’s the case, who’s your father? Huh? What’s his name.”

“I don’t know. I didn’t ask.”

“Uh-huh? Maybe you should have.”

“I was six weeks old at the time.”

“Like that’s some kind of excuse.”

Ring! Ring!

Luckily for Lihi, if you ask me, it’s clear one of them is being saved by the bell.

Kele’pona

(Just sound it out, keeping in mind that the Hawaiian alphabet doesn’t use a T (or an S, or a bunch of other fancy English letters), and that this particular letter often gets replaced with a K

when English words are integrated into Hawaiian.)

“Ring-ring! Ring-ring,” went the cartoon dream phone as chipper as can be. “Um, excuse me. Hate to interrupt your intellectual debate there, but I need answering. Ring-ring! Excuse me. Ring-ring.”

“Well, as scintillating as this conversation is, I’ve got to get that,” and then playing the role that she has held since anyone can remember, Lihi answered the phone all professional like, “Lihi speaking.”

Oddly -- or perhaps not too oddly -- everyone on the other end of the line always thought that rather than saying her name, Lihi was merely saying the call sign of the island.

In fact this is the sort of aside that Cliff is prone to make while telling a tale and has become a sort of trademark feature of both his stories and his dreams, but before Cliff can go into the long-term significance of this any further, Lihi breaks into his thoughts and continues her conversation with the caller. “Yes. Yes. OK, I understand. I will give the message to Cliff... to the new attaché, immediately... Of course, sorry, now.” And then cupping her hand over the receiver, Lihi explains to Cliff, “It’s the Menehunes. They just wanted to make sure that you understood that it wasn’t them... not yet.”

“What? What does that mean?”

“I think it’s a veiled threat serving as a warning. Truthfully, I’d like to explain further... set you straight on quite a number of things that you’ve gotten wrong in your story so far, actually. But you’ll be waking up now... Oh, but before you do, you really should see somebody about that knock on the head of yours. Having dreams like this isn’t normal. And if they carry through to the waking world...”

But that is all Lihi could say, before a foggy-headed Cliff heard the ringing of a phone in the distance.

Ring! Ring!

Ring! Ring!

Ring! Ring!

Chapter 7 - Lihi Speaking

{Graphic of the island shows a troop of Menehunes having fun: cutting wires, calling long distance to talk to their friends, and sawing away at the supports on the attaché's quarters, appropriately named Cliff House, because it sits halfway extended over a cliff on rotting planks, ready to fall.}

Wa'wa'wa'wae

(Being the sound a person might make as they fall to the ground because their shoelaces have been tied together while they slept. Ha. Ha. Very funny, guys.)

Ring! Ring!

Ring! Ring!

Ring! Ring!

This would be when Cliff jumped up to answer the phone, only to discover (as he was falling back to the floor) that someone (probably not the Menehunes) had tied his shoelaces together.

Without missing a beat, but politely waiting until after the thud, Lihi answered the phone as she had been doing for years.

"Lihi speaking..."

"I'm sorry, he's not available at the moment..."

"I believe he's inspecting the grounds, sir, taking a short trip, and getting a feel for the place."

It's amazing that she could keep a straight face.

"I will let him know, sir."

B # Stink Eye

(Perhaps not as deadly as the evil eye; but for the most, it conveys the same intent...)

"Who was that?" Cliff asked from where he lay on the floor, sort of like a cat, trying to act natural, as if he had planned to

stumble and fall all along.

“Captain Ka’haole?” Lihi advised.

“Who?”

“Cool Ridge,” Poke chimed in from the couch.

“Coolidge?”

“Yeah, yeah. I think the last guy called him that once or twice during his first week here, too,” Ninja had to agree.

“And what did Coolidge want?” Cliff asked as took his shoes off and set to untangling his shoelaces.

“He wanted to remind you that only authorized personnel are to answer the phone... or utilize the radio equipment.” And then, because she really was a good secretary and felt it was an important part of her job to relay any and all messages no matter how ludicrous they might at first appear, Lihi added, “Oh, and when they were tying your shoelaces together, the Menehunes were grumbling about a luau, you know, how it better be a good one.”

“Wait! You saw them tying my shoelaces together and you didn’t do anything to stop them?”

As she looked, glared, and/or cast a stink eye at the two boys sitting on the couch, Lihi only remarked, “Personally, I have found Menehunes highly resistant to control. Sometimes it is best to simply endure their antics.”

Menehune

(About yea high, brown skinned, and if you let them, the locals will describe them more like dwarfs than anything else, but you know that can’t possibly be right. I’m thinking they got to be more like fairies or fey or light-hearted creatures of the forest than anything else.)

“It’s always a mistake to ignore the Menehunes or their demands,” Poke advised as he pulled a crumpled up piece of paper out of his pocket. “Oh, while they were here, they left you a ransom note.”

“In your pocket?”

“Geez, you idiot,” Ninja groaned as he realized the game was up.

But you had to hand it to Poke, he had all the answers.

“Yeah, OK. I admit it, the handiwork is mine, but they made me do it... said they’d terrorize my sister in her sleep if I didn’t help. I just hope me telling you this doesn’t compromise my agreement with them. I’d... I’d,” sniff, sniff, “I’d hate to think anything untoward would happen to my sister.”

“And my shoelaces?” Cliff inquired. “What about that?”

“Menehunes,” Poke replied defiantly, flat faced, devoid of any emotion, grief, or remorse.

“Oh, yeah, yeah,” Ninja said, backing his younger friend up. “Menehunes did it. They don’t like hiking boots, you know.”

“Yeah, right,” Cliff muttered to himself. “OK. Let’s see this ransom note of yours.”

“Oh, it’s not ours, it the Menehunes,” Poke insisted.

What Menehunes really, really want

(OK. Fine. Sue me. This doesn’t even have the thinnest veneer or pretense of being Hawaiian... like most the sub-chapter heading have. But then, a newspaper collage ransom note is hardly what anyone would call a bit of Hawaiian inspired folklore, now is it?)

The Menehune’s List of Demands

Kicking Luau

Honking Loud Stereo Speakers

Unlimited Radio Access

Abolishment of Homework

Ka’ka

(Yep, it means what you think it means: ka’ka. Or if you prefer, you can add pulu’pa to that. As in I think you’re full of ka’ka, and I’m calling your pulu’pa.)

Clipped together as it was from old newspapers and magazines in the best of Saturday morning cartoon tradition, Cliff read the ransom note slowly,

“Let’s see, Kicking Luau. I haven’t even unpacked yet, going to have to put that one on hold for the moment. I mean, it’s rude, right? to bug a guy about a luau before he’s even unpacked. So, we’re just going to overlook that for the moment. What’s next? Honking Loud Stereo Speakers.”

“And not one of those cheap...”

“Shut up,” Ninja said as he prodded his friend.

“Ah, yeah. Those Menehunes know quality when they hear it. They don’t take lightly to being offered second hand crap in tribute.”

“Discerning blackmailers. I like the style of these... Menehune’s, you say? But I got to tell you, I don’t know anything about stereo speakers.” And then scratching his head as if in thought, Cliff said, “Poke? Ninja? Think you could help me out with this one? Maybe make a suggestion? Put together a proposal whole new stereo system for me, you know, one that would make the Menehunes proud.”

“Sure thing.”

Can’t you just taste the misdirected excitement of youth?
Suckers!

O’kole

(Some places you just shouldn’t go... and I like to think, that says it all.)

“And then Lihi, you’ll do the requisition, yeah?” Cliff asked of his underage and highly illegal office assistant.

“So you’re authorizing me to use the office equipment... and the phone lines?”

“I don’t remember saying that.”

“So you’re taking away my priveleges?”

“I don’t remember saying that, either. Look, are you going to take care of this problem for me or not?” And then looking at the ransom note again, Cliff remarked to himself as much as anybody else, “I wonder if the Menehunes take dictation? These guys seem pretty clever. I wonder how... what was his name? Cool Ridge. Yeah, I wonder how Cool Ridge would react if he got the monthly reports done up by the Menehunes in ransom note collage format.”

“Yeah-yeah, that’d be great,” Poke said brightly. He’d fire your o’kole for sure.”

Kiko’kiko

(Kiko’kiko, bing! Kiko’kiko, bing! Kiko’kiko, bing!)

“Hmm, fire my o’kole, you say?” Cliff said thoughtfully taking in the full ramification of the statement. “I think I’m going to need that particular appendage. So... maybe if I threw in an ice cream cone every once in a while. Do you think maybe the Menehunes would learn to use a typewriter, if I did that?”

“Why don’t I just put that requisition in for you?” Lihi suggested as she read between the lines and licked her lips in eager anticipation.

“Yeah, that’d be easier. Menehunes are not really known for their attention to detail, not big on dotting their i’s or crossing their t’s, if you know what I mean. But you let me see that paperwork before you send it out. Oh and Poke, next time you see those Menehunes, you tell them I’m working on the rest, but it’ll take some doing, you know, some time. But in the meantime, you might want to let them know that I may not be all that good with radios, call signs, and all that, but I’ve got a pair of wire clippers, and those, well, those I do know how to use.”

“You wouldn’t?”

“Ah, it’s not really much of a threat, I know. I mean, the Menehunes would probably be just as happy if we took this entire island back to the Stone Age, yeah?”

Lihi'i

(Literally, the best little part... of it all.)

“But you wouldn't really do that, would you?” Lihi asked in panicked desperation as she ran after Cliff, who for his part had decided to take a walk and get a little fresh air... not that his house had any walls, windows, or anything that might actually keep the breeze out or anything, but that was another matter.

“What? Do what?” Cliff asked, a little confused and light headed at this point, which is to say how he had felt since he'd landed on the island.

“Cut the wires,” Lihi clarified.

“Um, you do realize that I didn't come all the way out here to the middle of nowhere because I'm in love with the modern world.”

“Lihi'i isn't the middle of nowhere. It the center of everywhere.”

“Well, there you are, I stand corrected.”

But if the world kept swaying like it was, perhaps he would not be standing for long.

Hu'a Kai'moi

(A bed like a sea of foam... the Hawaiians not having a word for one of those Swedish foam mattress thingies.)

“Um, what were we talking about?” Cliff asked.

“You're not really going to cut the wires,” and then seeing as how she hadn't hit a nerve and Cliff didn't appear to care about what she was saying, Lihi added, “How I am I going to listen to my classes if you do that? I have a right to an education you know. It's the law.”

“But you can always go to Father Cross's school, yeah?” Cliff countered easily enough.

“So, you'd really cut the wires?”

“Trust me, I think I can live quite contentedly without the

‘Evil Influences of Western Civilization.’ Now, where did I hear those words before?”

“You’re taking them out of context.”

“No matter. The point is, if you and your friends want to call my bluff, just try me. I really don’t care,” and then after scratching his head and trying to decide the proper direction to go, Cliff added, “Now if you’ll excuse, I’ve got to go find those them there Menehunes and see we can work out a truce.”

“Well, if you’re going to that, you should take off your boots first, haole. Menehunes don’t like boots. It shows disrespect for the land.”

“Well then, better add flip flops to the requisition,” Cliff muttered as he started to stumble away, “And anything else you think you or I might require, you know, like a new bed. I always wanted to try one of those Swedish foam numbers. I think I get some kind of redecorating, new housing allowance, right?”

But before Lihi could reply, or fire off a list of items she had been compiling in her head, Cliff had disappeared around the corner.

Chapter 8 - Kala, king of the... Kalala’ku’s, I guess.

{Island graphic highlighting the flashing beacon that resides on top of Kala, the tallest peak on the island, while a tidal wave looms in the distance.}

Mana

(The power of magic if you believe; of that which powers magic, if you don’t)

Groggy from his nap. Disoriented, half way across the world, out of place, out of time, unsure of his footing

The world begins to spin

Remote as the island is, among the jungle, Cliff begins to feel as though he is falling back in time, to a time when magic was

alive and walked the land.

Ki'i

(Images carved in stone to stand the test of time... or merely to pass the time.)

As Cliff walked up the hill and past the petroglyphs, ancient religious shrines, and other reminders of the past it seemed as though he was walking back in time.

Ula'ula Ula'ula

(The tropical cardinal being named after his favorite song that goes something like, Wooly Bully, one-two, Wooly Bully, ta-da, Wooly Bully...)

Better watch your step

You be careful

You no introduce us yet

No want you to die before you do that

That's right. Careful there, haole.

Cliff.

Yeah, careful there, haole Cliff.

“Et all very confusing, you ask me,” stated a bird with a red mohawk.

“Dat why nobody asking you,” replied a large black bird with white crosses on her wings as if she was some WWI fighting ace.

“And you two would be?” Cliff asked, like totally nonchalantly, as if he was used to having conversations with talking birds.

“Ise Ula'ula but you cans call me da Cardinal Bill.”

“And Ise da Myra Myna... so that's what you'se can call me,”

the fighter pilot explained as she took a half curtsy. “At your service,”

“What’s? Don’t says we’s at his service! You’s says dat, and he getters da wrong idears for sure.”

Manu

(A bird, which when you get right down to it looks nothing like a Menehune; but then, what do you expect when a haole guy tries to tell a story about Hawaii.)

“And why are you two here?” Cliff asked as he rubbed his aching head.

“We’s here’s because you’s should reallys gets that noggin of yours looked at, Meester.”

“Yeah, you’re right,” Cliff had to agree. “I am getting dizzy again. Maybe I should sit down here before I fall off the edge.”

“No! No! Et badders luck to sit down halfway!” Myra cautioned him.

“Oncer you start, you gots to go alls da way to da tops,” Cardinal Bill agreed.

“Why? You two just want to make sure I’m good and high when you finally push me over the edge?”

“Nah, dat not et.”

“Et already’s far enoughts for dat.”

“Besiders, we’s wanters to killers you, we just sawers off da legs underneath on dat shack of yours.”

“You evers sees underneath? Dat stuffers rotting away.”

“Termites, ants: dey good eating, youse ever get hungries.”

“Thanks for the tip. But to tell you the truth, I haven’t checked out the underside of my home yet.”

“Dat the good idears.”

“What you don’t know, can’t hurtees you. Dat what I always sayers?”

Myna

(As Hawaiian as a mongoose, but since both mynas and mongis(?) were both imported pretty recently, everyone just calls them by their English names. Of course, rather than this lesson in etymology, Cliff had other things on his mind.)

“Wait. Wait. Wait...”

“Spits it out, haole.”

“Wait a second. So are you saying that now that I know of you, you’re going to hurt me?”

“Dat dependers.”

“On what?” Cliff asked with the keen interest in his own self survival that the question deserved.

“On da luau’ers”

“Et better be’rs da kicking luauers.”

“So, you guys actually wrote that ransom note?”

“What? Ula write da ransom note? He’s can’t eben spell his name.”

So that’s why I don’t have to worry about you guys.”

“I know knows.”

“But youse safers for now.”

“We’a givers you da gracie periods.”

“But dat luau better be good, yeah.”

“Yeah, I guess so. Everybody’s talking about it.”

“Hey’s youse funny guys.”

“Buts da looks not eberyting.”

C

Backwards, forwards, sideways in time: Cliff was sort of worn out -- tired, dizzy, and sleepy -- when he reached that summit: 737’ in the sky.

“So he’s takers da nap?”

“Feeders da birds?”

“Dance wit da Menehunes?”

“Um, I think Cliff sat and rested.”

“But youse broughted da sandwichees to shares, yeah?”

“Youse always do.”

“Tell us you’d broughtee da sandwichees.

D

That first time, Cliff could really have used a snack, or a drink of water, or something. He really should have planned ahead.

“No sandwichees!”

But after that, he never forgot to bring provisions again.

“Whew!”

“Dat close.”

“Dey da peanutbutteries and honeys sandwichers?”

“Only the best.”

“Ef dey da best day have da chocolate frosting inside.”

“Maybe we’ll save that for dessert.”

“Now’s youse talking, meester.”

E

I really had more of a story tell here, guys.

“Dat Okers.”

“We’s do ets.”

“See’rs, not da first timers...”

And not the second, or the third, but after the luau, after the first month, after the first year, Cliff decided he needed a vacation...

“But ders no wayers he getters in da planers agains...”

So he, grabbed his camping gear and headed to the top of the Kala: the highest point on the island.

F

“He’d likers you’d to believes folks missers him rights aways.”

But they didn’t. Cliff was gone for one, two, three weeks before anybody noticed.

“Hey, where Cliff?”

“He no eat at hotel for three weeks?”

“Eh, et no matter.”

But after the fourth week folks began to wonder.

“He up the Kala? Why he there?”

“Good view.”

“Got the antenna.”

“Not the best place to camp...”

“Too windy.”

“But it high up.”

“Why he want to be high up in the sky?”

G

“Why you up here, Cliff?”

“Hey, Kami!”

“No, hey Kami me. Why you up here?”

But how do you explain that you need a break, that you got the rock fever and are sick of being on the island... but that you don't know a way of getting off that would be worse than staying put... so you're just taking a break.

I guess you don't really, and so Cliff didn't either.

H

“He no say. He just up there, look to sea, and no say.”

“He up to something.”

“Yeah, he up to something.”

I # Tsunami

(Big wave, like really big wave.)

It took Kami and Kimo another week to figure it out.

“It the tidal wave!”

“The tsunami!”

“We got to get to high ground!”

“We join Cliff!”

So they closed up shop, packed a bag of food and head for the hills.

J

After a week, Auntie and Sarah (Kami and Kimo's respective wives) noticed that they were missing.

"They with Cliff on the Kala. They pack bunch of food and they leave."

Auntie and Sarah looked at each other.

"Why they do that?"

And without a word loaded up on provisions, picked their children up on the way and headed to the peak.

K

If this were a hula song, we'd repeat this for every person on the island: the Seven Lani's and their mother's the Three Sisters, Tutu & Lolo, Mano, Deda, and so on, but the real problem with going down a list that includes everybody is that you invariable forget somebody...

L

After yet another week, Anne -- aka Crazy Anne, though for the most part the crazy part is left off these days -- noticed something was amiss. There had been a steady stream of folks walking by her house on the way to Cliff's and the peak, but no more.

She went to the beach, but no one was there, so she took a swim.

She went to the hotel, but no one was there, so she poured herself a beer.

She walked through the village, but no one was there, so she sat and ate a mango as the sun went down.

And then she saw the fire on the mount.

She heard the singing.

She looked to the sky, the sea, and knew what she must do.

She grabbed a few bottles from the bar, filled a bag with chips, rounded up her mongooses, and made her way to the summit.

M

Kami was angry at first when he realized where she'd gotten

the wine, but it was a long walk down.

“You pay for that, Anne?”

“You want I should sell you a cup?”

“Maybe we call it free.”

And from there the party got out of hand. They drank, they ate, they told stories, and then they slept. Then they woke up, opened the second bottle, and did it again.

N

But on the third day there was no bottle to open, no food to drink, and everybody could have used a bath.

“Why we here again?”

“Cliff... tsunami.”

“Where’s this tsunami of yours, Cliff.”

But Cliff just looked to sea.

O

And an hour later his tsunami rolled in.

“It not much of a tsunami.”

“More of a rogue wave.”

“Not even big enough to surf.”

“Your info wrong, Cliff.”

“Next time you hear about tsunami, you keep it to yourself, Cliff.”

“It big waste of time.”

And then one by one they left, till Cliff was all alone.

P

The next day Thirty Seven’s plane landed in the lagoon, and Cliff decided it was time to take a shower, walk down to the beach, and see what was new in the world. He’d been gone long enough.

Q

“Dat’s not da luau’ers, meester!”

“Remembers, you still owers us da luau’ers!”

“Yeah, but I still have to talk to Thirty Seven about getting provisions.”

“You’s do’s dat nows?”

“Not yet, I figured I’d just walk down the hill,” going

backwards and forwards in time, “and visit with Anne first... then maybe Father Cross. I got a complaint about the workload he’s been assigning.”

“Yeah, you’s got to do’s someting about dat homerworks.”

“Et da killer.”

Chapter 9 - And they lived Happily Ever After

{Wedding bells...}

A

Of course, Cliff’s traumatic brain injury continued to act up -- the one folks on the island would continue to talk about... well, pretty much forever.

“Eh, you know how Cliff is. He not right. Hit head first day, and he never the same... or least wise, that what we hope. Hate to think he the best the State Department could come up with.”

B

The point is, Cliff must have spaced and forgotten his original destination, because he walked right by Crazy Anne’s House and Father Cross’ Church without remembering to look up, wave, or turn in and stay awhile to chat.

Instead, he found himself waist deep in the lagoon, staring at the ever present rainbow that was dancing in the waterfall’s mist and listening to Mr. Harrison -- the legendary attaché of old --conduct a wedding ceremony.

C

“Do you take Crazy Anne to be your lawfully wedded wife to have and to hold?”

“I do.”

“Just hold your horses, young buck. I’m not done, not by a long shot. Do you promise to honor her whims, nurture her dreams, and only remember the good times...”

“I...”

“Whoa there! Not yet. Do you promise to love her unconditionally, to support her art projects no matter the cost overruns, laugh at her jokes -- take her to Europe at least once and

dine at Chez Paris -- and listen to her witty and charming stories over and over again?"

"..."

"This is where you say, 'I do,' boy."

"Um, what was that part about cost overruns and Chez Paris?"

"Just say your line."

"Um, OK. I do."

Sucker!

D

"And do you, Crazy Anne, do you take this strapping young man and promise to wrap him around your little finger, make his head twirl, and bend him to your will."

"I do..."

"Hey! Wait a second; that's not fair!"

I've said it before and I'll say it again.

Sucker!

E

Whenever there's a wedding on Lih'i, everyone shows up. In truth, it's because of the big luau that is always thrown afterwards (and sponsored by the happily married couple, i.e. the man), but also because what else is there to do on the island: a party's a party.

I guess what I'm saying is: even though this here is a flashback dream sequence Thirty Seven was there as well... in one of those string bikini numbers.

F

"Stop staring. I'm serious. Stop staring."

And then, because Cliff is a gentleman, and Thirty Seven wears one of those big Bowie knife thingies pretty much all the time, it was time to watch the rest of the wedding.

"You know though, in all fairness, you really shouldn't dress like that if you don't want guys to stare."

"Just keep your eyes forward, fella."

G

It's hard to concentrate on a wedding when your staring at the

profile of the person standing next to you out of the corner your eye when you're stuck in the middle of a flashback dream sequence.

"Tough. Deal with it."

"Oh look, it's time for them to throw the bouquet."

H

The way Thirty Seven dove for that thing. It was sort of embarrassing.

"It's a dream! Everyone got one!"

"So, I guess this is a pretty good indication you and I are going to be getting married before long."

"Dream on."

But that sort of goes without saying.

I

"Why are you hanging around with me anyhow?"

"I like hanging around with you."

"Yeah, I mean, why aren't you talking about Anne?"

"What do you mean? We're at her marriage."

"But you're talking to me, not her."

"Oh, right. I guess, I just haven't got to a convenient segue point yet."

"Let me help you out. Go talk to the turtle."

"The one smoking the cigar? Truthfully, I've been trying to keep my distance. He seems kind of sleazy."

"That's because he's a personification of you."

"Ouch, that hurts."

"I'll say," the turtle had to agree as Thirty Seven dissolved away into the distance.

J

"Oh, yeah. We should do this right," the turtle began. "Ted the Talking Turtle at your service."

"Um, pleased to meet you?"

"You don't sound too sure."

"Well, it's just the..."

"Cigar and the bottle of tequila?"

“Yeah, especially considering I don’t drink or smoke.”

“Yeah well, somebody has to.”

K

And then after taking a hearty puff and an even heartier chug Ted the Talking Turtle handing Cliff a framed photo of a bikini clad beauty.

“Who’s this?”

“You should be asking, what’s this?”

“OK. What’s this?”

“That’s your segue. Now if you’ll excuse me, some of those ladies in waiting are looking might fine. Think I’ll grab myself a bite, if you know what I mean.”

Chapter #10 - Crazy Anne... ain’t so crazy... at least, not compared to Cliff.

{Mongooses overrunning island, surfing, staring out of page}

Cliff rubbed his head as he looked at Anne’s wedding picture. For a confusing moment, he had almost felt as if had been right there in the celebrations. It wasn’t a good sign. He felt dizzy. He needed to get his head looked at by a professional, but that meant a plane trip, so it wasn’t going to happen anytime soon. In the meantime, he needed to figure out why this island paradise was so difficult to understand. Oh, he could wrap his mind around it here and there, but understand? Not a chance.

I mean, why was he traveling back and forth in time, hither and thither across the island, and most importantly up and down that blasted mountain road?

337’ never seemed so far.

B

“You better sit down,” Crazy Anne, Eccentric Anne, or just Anne advised as she gingerly pried her wedding picture out of Cliff’s hands.

As she did so, Cliff looked at the pair of mongooses who where asleep in the proffered chair. One stirred out of its slumber enough to make his feelings on the matter known by hissing at

Cliff. Wisely, Cliff decided to remain standing.

“At least they don’t talk.”

“Oh, but they do,” Crazy Anne insisted. “Max just said, ‘You can have the chair when I’m done.’ It could be awhile.”

“It’s OK. I’ll just stand.”

“Good choice. So what can I do you for?”

C

Cliff had been going down the hill and having come to the first house, he had decided stop by and introduce himself.

“So do it already,” Anne interrupted. “You go on with that interior dialogue and you’ll use up your material in no time.”

“Um, yeah. OK.”

“That’s your name? ‘Um, yeah. OK.’ Strange name if you ask me. Of course, it that’s how you go around introducing yourself, everyone’s just going to shorten it to OK, and then O, and in no time you’ll be called Zero. I suppose it’s fitting seeing as how you and Thirty Seven seemed to have hit it off...”

“She threatened my life.”

“Well, ‘Um, yeah. OK,’ you probably deserved it. What did you do anyhow?”

“I think she was just intimidated by my good looks.”

“And they call me crazy.”

Ta-da-da.

D

“Look, before this goes any further, I should tell you my name is Cliff.”

“Then why did you say it was ‘Um, yeah. OK’?”

“I never said that.”

“I think you did. Ricco, what did this fella call himself after he said he was going to introduce himself?”

At this point a mongoose twittered, Anne looked smug, and Cliff thought seriously about simply backing away slowly. Sometimes, it was best not to know your neighbors too intimately.

E

“No one’s going to believe you?”

“What?” Cliff asked, despite himself, despite the fact he was almost out the door.

“I’m just saying no one is going to believe you.”

“My name’s Cliff. What’s not to believe.”

“Next you’ll be telling folks your last name is Hanger and you’re some sort of secret government agent...”

“I work for the State Department.”

“Go on.”

“Um, yeah. Good idea. Maybe I should just leave.”

“No. No. Go on. Tell me about this secret agent thing you got going. Me and the boys like a good yarn, Mr. Cliff... Hanger?”

F

It was clear that if Cliff was going to get anywhere he was going to have to revert to interior dialogue...

“Cheep! Cheep! Hiss!”

“Pete there likes his face time. You’ll have to forgive him.”

“Cheep! Cheep!”

“Oh, and next time, it might be best to bring some of those honey and peanut butter sandwiches that you’re famous for. The boys really seem to like those.”

And that was pretty much how Cliff and Anne’s first interview went.

G

“Cheep! Cheep! Ba-ba-ba-ba-ba.”

“I don’t know Frederick. With an alias like ‘Um, yeah. OK,’ it’s pretty clear he hasn’t been playing the secret agent game for very long. Maybe they knew he wasn’t cut out for the life of a spy and to keep him quiet they gave him an out of the way plush job where he couldn’t do any harm.

H

Walking down the road, Cliff recalled what Anne -- as in Crazy Anne -- had told him, quickly and summarily as interior dialogue, so he could just get on with this story.

So short and sweet.

Having married on Lihī’i, Anne had fond memories of the

place. Sitting alone in her house with Fluffy, her cat, the two of them hatched a plan to bring a little excitement into their lives, and the next thing you know they were building a house (if that's what you want to call it) on Lihi'i.

Both Anne and Fluffy took well to the island. It rejuvenated them, and they even made friends with the local mongoose population: it didn't hurt that they liked to nap and were happy to share their food.

And all in all, we could leave it right there if Anne wasn't crazy and therefore intent on turning the mongooses and her cat into vegetarians. Let just say that although the lot of them are happy to eat cantolope, musk mellon and the odd bit of spinach, mango, or turnip flavored with broth, these sorts of foods sort of cruise right through a cat's or a mongooses' digestive system without much change or alteration on the way.

Like I said, it's best to leave it at that... without going into the olfactory details.

Chapter 11 - Father Cross

{Cross planted into the island}

Dizzy and with the slash on his leg starting to act up, Cliff continued down the hill. The next stop would be Father Cross's, the church, and the school: that's right, three buildings in one.

Father Cross was out front tending his garden and fighting a mongoose for a carrot.

"Oh, no! You're not going to be like this too!"

B

Being a priest and all, Cliff had been sort of hoping that Father Cross would be more down to earth.

But well, picture the scene if you will: Father Cross wearing the sort of hybrid between Sunday Vestments and Saturday evening hula wear that you only see on... well, Lihi'i, I'm guessing. It was a sight to behold: white collar, black short sleeved shirt, white shorts, black socks, and orange sandals... for that personalized touch.

C

Of course, the moment Cliff came into view the mongoose let go of the carrot and zipped off into the underbrush, so it was almost exactly like he had imagined the entire thing.

“Like what?” Father Cross replied, sort of picking the conversation up from where it had left off, but really that had been quite a while ago and you couldn’t expect Cliff to remember something like that at this point.

“Oh? The vegetables,” Father Cross continued after guessing as to what Cliff was talking about. “Yeah, yeah. I do the vegetarian thing weekdays, but don’t think I won’t be tearing into that pig come Sunday... or whenever you’re having that luau? You haven’t really said yet.”

D

No, he hadn’t said yet. Cliff had other things to settle before he tackled hosting a luau. There was the menehunes’ list of demands, after all.

Reprinted here for your edification and amusement, which Cliff took the opportunity to show to Father Cross.

Menehune List of Demands

Kicking Luau

Honking Big Computer Screen

Unlimited Computer Access

Abolishment of Homework

E

“Yeah, yeah. I hear what you’re saying. No homework. Not very popular with the menehunes, I understand that. But really, see right here, a kicking luau is the first item on the list,” Father Cross noted with more playfulness than anyone has ever really appreciated in a Wearer of the Cloth and a Bearer of the Truth.

“Shouldn’t you be taking care of that first? Honestly, I think if you thought things through, you’d realize that you should be talking to Kimo, not me. He roasts a killer pig... and Mano can do the hunting... so maybe you need to talk to him first.”

“I thought maybe you could just make an announcement that

the menehunes -- not the students or the children, mind you, just the menehunes -- not longer needed to do any homework.”

“I ain’t doing no such thing,” Father Cross grinned devilishly -- yeah, devilishly, that’s right. “Leastwise, not without a kicking luau first. I am of the firm conviction that them there menehunes need to learn their reading and writing just like the rest of us. Though, if you could convince them to come to Sunday morning prayers -- and be all respectful and polite, like -- maybe I could working something out with you.”

“Maybe I’ll just go talk to Kimo first, or Mano, you said?”

“Yep, he’s the one to talk to about a pig.”

Chapter 12 -- Kami ain’t no Commie

Cliff continued down the hill. No one else lived on the hill, so he had a hard time finding anyone else to visit before hitting the beach, but that doesn’t mean he didn’t try.

“You’s working on da listers der, Cliffers,” a menehune asked.

“Of coursers, he’s working on da listers. Didn’t you’s just see him talking to da Cross.”

“We no’s go’d to churchers,” another advised suddenly as he appeared from no where.

“Et against our fai’eathers,” a fourth agreed.

“That’s alright,” Cliff assured them.

“But you’s still doing’ers da listers?”

Cliff would have liked to reply in the negative, but that’s when he got to the bottom of the hill.

B

“Hey, Cliff! You just the man I want to see,” Kami -- the proprietor of the only store on the island, general or otherwise -- sang out full of glee. “When you having your luau? You want to put in your order? I get you ice cream? Beer? What you want? I get for you? You want the pig? The kicking luau? Yeah, yeah,” Kami whispered conspiratorially, “You want the kicking luau. Everybody does. I get your luau all covered. I your man. But

first, how you pay? You got cash? Or you need credit? We no accept personal check.”

C

As happy as Cliff would have been to discuss the virtues of an open ended revolving credit account with a Land Shark, Cliff thought it might be best to deal with the other kind of shark. “Do you know where Mano is?”

“Who knows? He never around. You no depend on him. He get you small runt of pig and still charge you too much. I get you Hormel, Jimmy Dean... Pig in da blanket, that what everybody want these days.”

D

It could be true. Cliff took a whiff of the air and a worried look crossed Kami face. “You no want that. That Spam. No good. Too cheap. No markup,” and then sort of seeing as how he had given his hand away, Kami added, “It not special. It everyday pig. You go. You see,” and with a dismissive wave of his hand Kami sent Cliff on his way.

Chapter 13 - Everyday is Luau Day

{Christmas Lights, Fireworks}

A

Time travels strangely on a tropical island. Oh, set down for a day, a week, or a month, and you might not notice. But after a year, you don't just start forgetting the day of the week, but even the month and the year.

B

Which is to say, it could have been Christmas, Chinese New Years, the Fourth of July, or perhaps more importantly, somebody's birthday.

C

“Yeah. It's Kimo's birthday,” Ted the Talking Turtle agreed as he juggled a trio of fictional accruements consisting of a cigar (half smoking, perpetually lit), a bottle of tequila (still searching for that worm), and skewer of sweet smelling meat (The Spam

Slam, Kimo's specialty).

"Go get your own," Ted said testily as he noticed Cliff eyeing his skewer of meat. "I don't even know why I'm talking to you. There are girls to be caught."

And with that, Ted chased after the first skirt that caught his eye. Of course being a turtle, chase is perhaps the wrong word: lumbered in slow motion after might be more accurate.

D

"How you enjoying the island?" Thirty Seven asked from out of nowhere, which is sort of a literal description of what happened.

"What? Where did you come from?"

"I come to Lihi'i for all the big holidays..."

"Kimo's birthday is a big holiday?"

"Poor boy, you really did give your noggin quite the blow." But before Cliff could respond or play the injury up for some real sympathy, Thirty Seven started to sway her hips.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm casting a spell on you."

It was no lie.

E

You know that artsy segue thing they do sometimes? Well, that's what happened to Cliff. There he was staring at Heaven, staring at delight, staring at Thirty Seven's navel; and although that most delightful of images stayed the same, as her hips bounced back and forth, to and fro, this way and that; the images which surrounded her changed: in the background fireworks and sparklers went off, glow sticks and Christmas lights twinkled brightly, and then there was the smoke from fires, bottles of wine, and the piled bounty of fish from the sea.

F

And then Thirty Seven was one of many as the entire population joined her in a welcoming dance and a promise of things to come.

"You can't just sit there, you know," Thirty Seven informed Cliff.

To the side Kimo was dancing with Sarah -- 500lbs of pure smooth motion and force under control -- while the Lani's danced as one with Lihi, Poke, Pearl, and Ninja as Kami danced with Auntie, and the ancients -- Tutu and Lolo -- danced with their sons, Kane and Mano.

Stalling, Cliff thought back to the plot. He knew he was supposed to ask him something.

"Just give Mano \$100," Thirty Seven advised as she swayed her hips. And let's face it, how could he argue with logic like that. "Might as well give Kane \$100, as well. It'll keep the peace," and he'll make sure there is plenty of poi, breadfruit, pineapple, and lilikoi to go around.

G

You know, it did make a sort of sense.

They would take care of the details, spread the wealth to others on the island (thus taking some of Kami's attention away from Cliff), while Kimo would cook the pig for free -- more because he would want it done right than any other reason.

But as all this flashed through Cliff's mind, it's not like Thirty Seven had stopped rocking her hips. She was much too clever for that, and when she saw something she wanted...

H #.

Soon the couples had paired off: Kimo with Sarah, Kami with Auntie, Lolo and Tutu, Raul with Tehani, Hiro with Miri, and on and on, until only Nanihi was dancing with the children, Father Cross was playing the drums, and Thirty Seven was advising, "You better start dancing soon, this is your last chance."

What was Cliff to do?

He stood up and started to do the Funky Chicken.

I

Luckily, folks on Lihi'i have a sense of humor.

"You've got to be kidding."

"It's called the Hot Potato. It took me years to learn."

"It looks like you're having a seizure. Look, never mind that. It's time you learned a new dance anyway," and with that, Thirty

Seven led Cliff into the jungle.

Yowza!

And then, Ouch!

“Is that a rock?”

“What the branch!”

And so on.

J

Of course, I exaggerate.

And even though the jungle was pretty darn crowded with all the other couples at this point, Thirty Seven knew exactly where to go so she never intruded on another. In fact, they never heard from another soul until morning...

Or in Cliff’s case, until he fell asleep for the night.

K

“That’s it! You’re not falling asleep already!”

She was, of course, kidding.

“No I’m not. It’s time for your next dancing lesson, Big Boy.”

“Well, OK. If you insist. How I show you the...”

“If you say, ‘The Robot,’ I’m out of here.”

“Um... OK,” Cliff said thinking quickly. “How about that luau thingy, then?”

“You mean hula?”

“Yeah, yeah. I’ve heard good things about hula.”

You know, they say it was outlawed, which I’m guessing only increased it’s popularity...

Chapter 14 - Massage

{Flowers

“You know, I’m not really making any progress on this list.”

“You say that like it’s a bad thing. Give me that list.”

Thirty Seven lay next to Cliff, which meant Cliff was lying next to Thirty Seven, and the two of them were getting a message courtesy of Nanihi. It was almost like a dream come true -- all the more so because he was pretty sure he was wide awake.

“OUCH!”

“Now you know you’re wide awake,” Thirty Seven said smugly, but seeing as how Pe’la delighted in doing the same thing most every night, it really wasn’t as convincing as it might seem.

B

“I can’t believe you’re still working on this list,” Thirty Seven remarked after a bit. “How long has it been?”

“A day, a week, a month, a year... time moves in strange ways on a tropical island.”

“Don’t give me that bull. How long has it been?”

“Well, I put off the luau as long as possible -- until the natives started to get restless. That was about a month. And then, you didn’t realize how special I was until I’d been on the island for a month or two.”

“It was two years. I had to make sure you weren’t some tourist and going to leave after your first tour.”

“You sure it wasn’t two months.”

“I’m sure. My mother’s going to be reading this.”

“OK. Fair enough. Two years, but we became friends pretty fast...”

“And you’re just as good at avoiding an answer as you ever were. How long did it take you to appease the dreaded menehunes.”

“Hey! Have some respect. It was a month of backbreaking toil.”

“Uh, huh?”

“But let’s not rush back there right at the moment. Let’s enjoy the message.”

Besides, as Thirty Seven looked over the list, Cliff was sort of phasing in and out of consciousness. Thirty Seven had assured Cliff that Lomi Lomi -- a sort of massaged applied with

only Nanihi well rested massaged

Chapter Heading Possibilities

Slipper Tan, Kama'aina (local), Ewa (towards beach), Mauka (towards Mountain), Makai (towards sea), Aloha E'komo (Hello, and welcome to paradise), Calabash (family bowl), Pa'ani (sport), Mai'ku (rolling game, cricket, bowling, with discs), Hui (cooperative, association, family), Malihini (newcomer), kapa (forbidden), kine (thing), grinds (food), ono (Best, good, number one), shaka (hand sign) he'enalu (surfing)