

ANCIENT GUARDIANS:

The Hawaiian Legend of
SHARKTOOTH and HAWKEYE

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SYNOPSIS

Her world was about to change, but would she be able to preserve her innocence and gentle nature? There, under the cool mist surrounding Mount Wai'ale'ale on the island of Kaua'i, a young Hawaiian girl would be propelled from her serene garden paradise into the dark world of the great manō (shark) and the lofty sky of the majestic pueo (owl). Though she was young, and her voice soft, Kawehi would rise to surpass the expectations of all around her. Her destiny would stand as testament that greatness is founded upon long suffering and conviction, that true power can never be attained by those who ruthlessly abandon their humanity in pursuit of dominance--and that sometimes, great legends blossom from small, innocent whisperings.

Dear Reader,

Like many cultures, Hawaiians have their proverbs--they're called olelo noeau. There's an olelo noeau that says, "I ka 'ōlelo nō ke ola, I ka 'ōlelo nō ka make." It speaks to the power of our words--there is life and death in what we say. This novel is my way of using my words to breathe life into parts of my memories that I cherish dearly.

First, my heritage. My story is fictional, and like all writers, I added some flourish to certain parts, but the roots of my story remain grounded in my Hawaiian culture. This tale I've woven incorporates many Hawaiian words, practices, and beliefs that are slowly fading. For example, in ancient times, Hawaiians would carve ki'i, or images, into stones to document major events that occurred. Similarly, I also utilize ki'i to mark the significant events in this story. As such, at the beginning of every chapter, you will notice different combinations of ki'i.












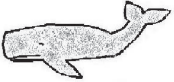
Throughout this tale, you will also see repeated reference to two particular ancestral guardians that appear on ki'i throughout Hawai'i: the manō (shark) and the pueo (owl). In Hawaiian culture, these protectors are collectively known as 'aumākua. They represent the core themes of this story: strength and wisdom. From the beginning to the end of this tale, you will see that I use both the Hawaiian and English terms for these guardians interchangeably.

As you read on, you will also encounter a kahakō, or macron, above the letter "a" in several Hawaiian words. Besides signaling to you, the reader, that the pronunciation of the word incorporates

a long vowel sound, the macron also alerts you to the fact that this is the plural form of the word. For example, ‘aumākua is the plural form of ‘aumakua; kāhuna is the plural form of kahuna.

And most importantly, I wanted my words and my story to touch your lives with at least a fraction of the wonder, amazement, and love that my baby brother Kahoku filled eighteen years of my life with--to revive his beautiful spirit, even if only for a little while. Aloha wau iā ‘oe e Kahoku--I love you, Kahoku.

‘Aumākua & Ki‘i (=image) Interpretation

Image (Ki‘i)	English	Hawaiian	Meaning
	Canoe	Wa‘a	Journey
	Canoe Paddler	Hoe wa‘a	Traveler; tested with quick changes of the ocean, sky and emotional changes of loved ones
	Family	‘Ohana	Solidarity
	Lizard	Mo‘o	‘Aumakua; guardian of a location; very cunning.
	Owl	Pueo	‘Aumakua; symbol of knowledge and wisdom
	Shark	Manō	‘Aumakua; symbol of power and strength
	Silver Hawk	‘Io ‘āhinahina	‘Io is an ‘aumakua; spirit escort, protector;
	Sorcerer Teacher	Kahuna	Many different specialties; some practiced sorcery
	To surf (Surfing)	He‘e Nalu	Wave rider
	Turtle	Honu	‘Aumakua; symbolizes humility, long suffering and perseverance
	Warrior	Koa	The warrior can be honorable or malevolent
	Whale	Koholā	Symbol of spiritual connection with deceased family





Book 1. The Dawning of a New Day

Chapter 1:

A GREAT LOSS

My brother Kahoku was so handsome--his eyes the color of caramel, and his skin golden from the sun. He was smiling and looking up at me from under the blissful, calm surface of the water. Kahoku was at home in the water, just like the fish he hunted. As he swam up closer to our canoe, towing the line strung up with the many fish he had speared, I could see something peeking out of his pocket. Within seconds, Kahoku broke the surface of the water and swung his catch over and into our canoe. After he had climbed into the canoe, Kahoku reached into his pocket and handed me an oyster.

“Go on, Wehi. Open up the oyster and see what’s inside,” he said, smiling.

“Wow, Uku, it’s a beautiful pearl!” I shouted, as I showed the pearl to my dad, who smiled and looked over at my brother.

“I remember when Wehi was a toddler and she was just starting to talk. Your mother and I tried so hard to coax Wehi into saying “momma” or “dada”. You can imagine our surprise when, after weeks of trying to coax your sister, Wehi instead blurted out “Uku”. I will never forget the expression on your mother’s face when that

happened--she was so surprised.” Dad started to chuckle as he placed Kahoku’s spear gun under the noho (seat) of the canoe. “Well, it is time to return home. Mom is waiting. Let’s see what you caught, Kahoku.”

“Speared some uhu [parrot fish], tako [octopus], and papio [juvenile trevally]. I wanted to catch something that everyone would enjoy for dinner tonight,” replied my brother as he handed both of his fish and the octopus over to my dad.

My dad’s eyes opened wide and his smile grew from ear to ear. Kahoku knew that our dad loved papio, and that our mom and I loved uhu and tako. It was going to be a feast! I was so excited thinking about our mom’s expression when we brought this catch home, but then, when I looked over at Kahoku, sitting with all of his fish in our canoe, my excitement started to fade. A strange feeling washed over me, almost as if something was telling me to take a mental picture of this moment with my brother because this would be the last time that I would share simple, happy days like this with him.

When we arrived home, Mom had already turned the oven on, and had gotten the frying pan on the stove. “Wehi,” she called out.

“Yes,” I answered.

“Please go wash up before dinner.”

“Okay, Makuahine [Mom],” I replied, as I passed by Kahoku’s room, on my way to the bathroom.

Just as I was about to close the bathroom door, I overheard Kahoku on the phone talking to his friend Mason. “Yeah, got some good eats, Brah! You guys want to come over?” I shook my head. There was something about Mason that bothered me. I really enjoyed the company of Kahoku’s other friend, Jonathon, who was always very polite and respectful. But Mason, on the other hand, was just the opposite. Take his ugly truck for example. My dad took great pride in his yard and spent countless hours mowing, raking, and watering the grass. He had asked Mason several times to park in

the driveway and not on the grass, but Mason continued to park his truck on the grass instead of the driveway. One day, I got so mad at Mason for not listening to my dad that I screamed at him from my bedroom window to park his pilau (stinky, dirty) truck in the driveway. He scowled at me for a while before moving it off the grass.

“Okay, Mason. No worries. Tell the guys I’ll see them tomorrow at school. No leftovers, though. Wehi will make sure of that!” Kahoku then glanced over in my direction and smiled at me. I giggled and ran into the shower before he could come over and tickle me. When I had finished showering and had put on my pajamas, I returned to the kitchen and helped my mom set the table.

“Kahoku, what are your plans tomorrow?” asked my dad as he cleaned and prepared the fish.

“I thought I would go surfing with Mason and Jonathon after school. Mason’s dad bought him a new surfboard and he wants to break it in,” answered Kahoku.

“Well,” said Dad with a chuckle, “don’t catch all the waves--and the girls.”

“Makua kāne [Dad], you know that I am seeing Lindsey. By the way, I let Mason catch most of the waves. Jonathon already told me that Mason is still recovering from Lindsey asking me to the prom instead of him. I don’t want to do anything more to bring him down. He’s one of my best friends.”

The sizzle of the papio on the cast iron skillet and the smell of hot, fresh rice permeated throughout our house. “First of all,” said Mom as she waved her spatula in the air and put her left hand on her hip, “Lindsey and you grew up together. It was natural that you became friends and then more. Mason should not hold a grudge against you for that.” Kahoku helped Mom “fluff” the rice and then walked over to the sink to mix the poi. As he passed by Mom on his way back to the table, he kissed her cheek and smiled.

“Don’t worry, Mom. I got everything handled.”

“Typical,” I said, as Kahoku sat down next to me.

“Wehi, what do you mean by that comment?” asked my Dad.

“Well, I know my brother,” I blurted out. “He never wants you or Mom to fuss over him. He is just like a cute, cuddly golden retriever who goes around and tries to make everyone feel happy, not sad,” I said as I looked over at my dad and smiled.

“Nice try, Wehi,” said my dad, “but don’t think that you are getting any closer to making your mother and I buy you that golden retriever puppy that you saw at the pet store last week.” Kahoku grabbed my hand from under the table and smiled over at me. He knew that I really wanted that puppy.

“Don’t worry, Wehi,” whispered Kahoku, “I will talk to dad about the puppy tomorrow, when I get home from surfing.”

“Kahoku, are you going to be playing football this year?” asked my dad, as he started to mix chili pepper water with soy sauce, to pour over his pan fried papio and hot rice.

“I don’t think that I have what it takes to play football,” responded Kahoku.

“I know that you would excel in football, Son. You just have to put in the time.”

“Well, I really think that I don’t have the talent for football, Dad. Maybe I should just stick with the sports that I have grown up with--like soccer and basketball.”

“You are too humble, Son. But, I will support your decision,” said my dad as he smiled at Kahoku.

I had grown up watching my brother Kahoku excel in a whole variety of sports, like body surfing, soccer, basketball, fishing, and skateboarding. Winning competitions that involved all of the above was easy for him, but he wasn’t boastful about his accomplishments. On many occasions, Mom and Dad would have to go and accept his trophies for him, as he would conveniently “disappear” from the award ceremonies. As for myself, well, I liked to brag about my

kaikunāne (brother) all the time! In my mind, there was nothing that my big brother Kahoku couldn't do. I was so proud of him.

“Wow, Mālie, you have outdone yourself tonight. Look at all of this ‘ono [delicious] food!” said my dad, as he carefully grabbed the bowls of rice and poi from my mom and placed it in front of the salad bowl.

“Thank you, Sweetheart. Well, let's eat before this fish gets cold,” responded my mom after she had set the pan fried papio in the middle of the table, right next to the oven baked uhu and tako poke.

As Dad made me a plate, he couldn't stop admiring the oyster that Kahoku gave me, which I had placed next to my glass of water. “By the way, Kahoku,” he started, “I wanted to ask you earlier how you found that oyster? Not many of them around here anymore, so I was quite surprised when you brought it into the canoe and gave it to your sister.”

“I don't know how that happened, Dad,” Kahoku replied. “This is going to sound crazy, but I kept returning to this one particular spot, almost like I was drawn to it. When I went back to it before I returned to the canoe, I saw this huge tako [octopus] going into this deep cave below the reef. Luckily, I was able to spear it and grab one of its arms before it disappeared. It was a pretty big tako! Took me a while to bring its entire body out of the cave, but when I did, I noticed it was tightly holding this oyster. Figured Wehi would get a kick out of opening it up and seeing if it had a pearl inside,” said Kahoku as he reached over and tickled me. “What are you going to do with your pearl, Wehi?” he asked.

“Hmmm. I think I will clean up the oyster shell after dinner and put the pearl back inside until I save enough money to take it to the jeweler and have them make a necklace for me.” Kahoku smiled and gave me a big hug.

When we were done eating, Kahoku stood up and looked over at me, “let's help Mom clean up,” he said.

“Okay, Uku,” I answered.

After Kahoku and I had placed all the dishes in the sink and cleaned up the oyster shell, Dad and Kahoku walked over to the woodworking shop in the back-yard while Mom and I finished washing the dishes. After Mom and I had wiped the table, we went into her room to watch a hula competition on television. She was always excited to watch familiar hula dances and loved to dance along. Usually, I would dance along with her, but on this night, I felt that I needed to be near Kahoku. “Mom,” I started. “Tomorrow is the first day of school and I have to get all my school supplies together. Would it be all right with you if I went to my room instead of watching the hula competition?”

“Okay, Wehi; but don’t stay up too late. Kahoku is taking you to school tomorrow, so be up and ready to go by seven sharp.”

“Aloha ahiahi [good night], Mom. I love you,” I shouted as I hurried out of her room.

I ran past my room and into the family room, then through the French doors and into the back-yard. Then, I slowly crept up alongside the outside of my dad’s wood shop, and sat down on the big, jagged lava rock right next to the shop’s tiny window. Neither Kahoku nor my dad could see me, but I could see them and hear everything they were saying.

“How’s school going, Kahoku?” asked Dad.

“Well, I am trying harder in math, but I decided not to stay in physics, so I will be taking human anatomy instead,” answered Kahoku.

“Well, at least you are being up front and honest with me, Kahoku. Your physics teacher called me earlier. She mentioned that she was disappointed to hear that you were dropping the class. She was surprised because you scored high on the physics pretest.”

“I know, Dad, but I want to also continue playing soccer. Physics would take so much of my time. You know me; I love to do so many

things. I don't want to be tied up at home studying all the time."

"Kahoku, I just wanted to know how school is going because I care about you and about the choices you make. You have all that it takes to go very far and succeed in life. You can go to any college and get a great education. If you want more of a challenge, you could get your degree, then join the military and train to be a helicopter pilot. I know that you are interested in flying, just like your cousin Ben. Have you gone up with him in his helicopter?"

"Yes, Dad. We are spending more time together. I really enjoy flying."

"Well, Kahoku, I trust that you will make the right decisions. You are graduating this year so I don't have to lecture you anymore. I just wanted to tell you that I love..."

Suddenly, the door to the workshop swung open and there stood my tūtū kāne (grandpa), Pono. "When did you get here, Dad? I didn't hear your car pull up," asked my father.

"Hello Manu; I came to speak to Kahoku, if that is all right with you," responded Grandpa Pono.

"Okay, Dad. Kahoku and I were just finishing up in here. Don't keep him up too long, though--school tomorrow."

"Okay, Manu. Tell my beautiful daughter-in-law, Mālie, that I said aloha [hello], and tell my inquisitive little granddaughter that I will come by again sometime this week to visit with her."

My dad turned and walked out of the shop and into the house, but I could still not bring myself to leave. I wanted to be next to Kahoku, despite how uncomfortable I felt while sitting on the jagged lava rock.

"Kahoku, I wanted to come by and discuss your training. Besides your cousin Ben and the two of us, does your dad or anyone else know?" asked Grandpa Pono.

"No, Grandpa. Dad thinks that I am spending time with Ben because I want to be a helicopter pilot," answered Kahoku.

“Well, if you decide on becoming a helicopter pilot, then I will support you one hundred percent, Kahoku!”

“But Grandpa, I don’t think that I would enjoy flying a helicopter after what I have experienced.”

“I understand how you feel, Kahoku. But we cannot tell others about our gifts. You were given a great responsibility. Your training will become much more difficult in the year to come. Don’t worry. I will be right by your side, I promise you, Kahoku. Now, get some rest and I will see you on Saturday,” said Grandpa Pono as he turned to head out the door.

“Okay, Pops,” replied Kahoku, as he smiled at Grandpa Pono. My grandfather paused for a while and chuckled, then turned around to face my brother.

“You are the only one who calls me that,” said Grandpa Pono, who grabbed Kahoku and gave him a big hug. Then Kahoku walked Grandpa Pono over to the door and gave him a fist bump before Grandpa Pono left.

After Kahoku had finished locking up my dad’s woodshop, he quickly glanced over in my direction, almost as if he could sense that I was hiding there, and before I could say anything, he ran up to me and scooped me into his arms. “Come on, Wehi, let’s go inside and get ready for bed. How long were you listening to...oh, never mind. Just promise me that you will not tell anyone what you overheard, okay?”

“I won’t tell, Uku, I promise.” And with that, my big brother carried me into my room, tucked me into bed, and kissed me good night. But I still had that lingering feeling that something bad was going to happen to him. I had a very hard time falling asleep, even with a stomach full of fish and poi. Eventually, my restless mind started winding down and I closed my eyes and dozed off.

“Get up, Little Lady. Breakfast is waiting for you on the table and Kahoku is almost ready to go,” said Mom.

“Oh Mom, please...I don’t want to go to school today.”

“Kawehi, you need to get up right now if you want to eat breakfast before your brother leaves.” I knew that my mom was getting a little upset with me because she called me by my full name, so I pushed back the bed covers and looked at her.

“All right Mom, but I didn’t really sleep well.”

My mom gave me a puzzled look. “Get up and get ready please,” she said firmly.

“Okay,” I muttered. But when she turned around and started walking outside to water her garden like she did every morning, I grabbed my bed cover, pulled it back over my head, and dozed off for just a second more.

“Hey, Wehi,” said Kahoku as he gently peeled down the covers, “we gotta go. Come on, let me help you choose your clothes; then you gotta run and wash your face and brush your teeth. Mom is going to be really mad when she comes back inside and sees that we haven’t left for school yet.”

All of a sudden, I could feel my heart starting to pound as I jumped out of bed and ran into the bathroom to brush my teeth. The last thing I wanted was for Mom to be upset at Kahoku because I slept in. I ran back to my bedroom, put on the outfit that Kahoku had picked out, then ran into the kitchen and grabbed a piece of toast and my backpack.

“Don’t worry about breakfast; I will stop and get you something on the way to school, Wehi,” said Kahoku.

“Okay, Uku,” I stuttered, as I stood there in the kitchen, chewing on the soggy piece of breakfast toast. I had barely swallowed the piece of toast before I bolted out of the house and hopped into the passenger side of Kahoku’s pickup truck.

After stopping to get me a breakfast sandwich, Kahoku drove me to my elementary school. As soon as we pulled into the parking lot, we were greeted by Kahoku’s girlfriend, Lindsey. She was

always very nice to me, and I enjoyed her company. “Well, Wehi, fourth grade already!” said Lindsey as she leaned into the truck’s passenger side window and kissed my cheek.

“Wehi, don’t forget your breakfast sandwich,” said Kahoku as he tucked the sandwich he had bought me into my backpack. Then he hopped out and came around to the passenger’s side of his truck. After he helped me step out of his truck, Kahoku grabbed several napkins from his glove compartment and handed them to me. “Here you go. Make sure that you wipe the crumbs off of your mouth when you finish eating your sandwich. I don’t want you to give those pesky boys any reason to pick on you--especially since I will not be picking you up after school today.”

“Okay, Uku,” I replied.

“Do you want to walk with us to Wehi’s classroom, Lindsey?” asked Kahoku.

“Sure. Let’s get going before the bell rings. Looks like everyone is already inside and sitting at their desks,” replied Lindsey, as she and Kahoku escorted me inside the classroom building and over to my classroom’s doorway at the end of the hall.

“Hold on, Lindsey. I just have one more thing to do.” Then, out of the blue, my big brother grabbed my hands and twirled me around in the hallway. He always loved to spin me around until I became so dizzy and begged him to stop.

“Let’s do it again! Come on, Uku!” I shouted. But then the bell rang.

“We will do this again tonight, after dinner. I promise,” said Kahoku, before pulling me in and giving me a big hug. “Behave now. Mom will pick you up after school. I love you, Wehi,” said Kahoku as he and Lindsey turned and walked away from my classroom. I waived at them as they got into his truck and drove out of the parking lot. Even though I could no longer see my brother’s truck, I continued to stand in front of my classroom’s doorway. That same

feeling of missing him came over me again, but this time it was stronger than before. I felt like I was paralyzed and couldn't move--I just stood there, like a sentry guarding a castle gate, until my teacher came over to escort me to my desk.

Despite my slow start, the school day went by really quickly, and before I knew it, the final bell rang and my mom had picked me up from school. "Mom, is Kahoku still going surfing with Mason and Jonathon today?" I asked, as I put on my seat belt.

"As far as I know. Is something bothering you, Wehi? You look a little worried."

"I'm okay, Mom. I just miss Kahoku. That's all."

"Well," said my mom as she pulled out of the parking lot, "if we hurry and get all of our errands done, we can stop and pick up a pizza for dinner and surprise Kahoku when he gets home tonight."



Meanwhile, Kahoku had already taken Lindsey home, stopped by the gas station for a supersized drink, and was driving over to Mason's house. As he pulled into Mason's driveway, Kahoku was greeted by a tall, red-headed, freckle-faced young man. "Sure took you long enough to get here, Kahoku," said the young man.

Kahoku smiled at him and shook his head. "Not even, Jonathon. It has only been thirty minutes since the last school bell rang. Where's Mason?"

"In the house, talking with his dad. Been waiting out here for him. You know how it is. I didn't want to be in the middle of that boxing tournament," quipped Jonathon.

Kahoku put his head down and let out a sigh, then looked up at Jonathon. "I hope they are not fighting again."

"Yeah. Mason's dad can be really mean at times. Remember when Mason came to soccer practice with his hand wrapped?"

“Yeah, man, I do. He never told us what happened. But I overheard the soccer coaches talking about how Mason stopped a fight between his old man and his handicapped grandfather.”

Just then, both friends stopped their conversation as Mason came running up to greet them. “Hey guys, sorry for the wait. I was just letting my old man know where we are going to be surfing--you know how he worries.”

Both Kahoku and Jonathon looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders, then grabbed their coolers, towels, and boards. They had this routine down to a science, and before Mason could even start his truck, Kahoku had already jumped into the passenger’s seat and Jonathon had hopped into the truck bed, where he sat alongside Kahoku’s board and Mason’s new surfboard.

As the boys pulled up to the beach, in front of the spot where they had all surfed together since elementary school, they noticed that the new boy at school, the one from Maui, had followed them there. This new boy had a habit of showing up wherever Kahoku and his friends went, since he had moved to Kaua‘i two weeks ago. To top it off, the boys noticed that he had gone out and bought the same brand of surf shorts that Mason was wearing.

“Man, he is getting on my last nerve,” said Mason, as he sat there next to Kahoku and glared at the new boy. “Look at him, Kahoku. He is always following us, and now he’s even wearing the same shorts as me! That’s it! I am going to let him have it!”

Kahoku turned to Mason and tried to calm him down. “Mason, just let him be.” Kahoku then put his hand on Mason’s shoulder. “Mason, are you sure you’re up to surfing today?”

“I am fine, Kahoku. I just need to clock that twerp, and I will feel even better!” quipped Mason, as he continued to glare at the new kid and crack his knuckles.

A little trickle of blood started to run down from Mason’s nose, but he didn’t seem to notice it. His pupils were small, like the tip of

a ballpoint pen. Kahoku knew this look all too well. “Mason, I think that we should surf another day. Why don’t you and Jonathon spend the night at my house? We can come back tomorrow morning.”

“Dude, why you always wanna spoil the fun?” responded Mason.

“I am just worried about you,” said Kahoku. “The waves are *really* big today and you need to be on your game and alert out there, Mason!”

“Dude, don’t tell me what I can or cannot do. Man, you always think that you know what’s best. Never fails. You know what? I’ll let you handle that new boy then. I’m going to surf!” exclaimed Mason, as he stared at Kahoku while the blood from his nose trickled down his mouth and dripped onto his arm.

“Mason, I got nothing but love for you. But you’ve got me worried--I have seen you like this before. You said you were done with the drugs, Mason.”

Mason turned away from Kahoku, jumped out of the truck, and started running toward the water. Kahoku hopped out of the passenger’s seat and stood on the sand watching Mason race toward the shoreline. Before diving in, Mason looked back at Kahoku and shouted, “You wanna stay by the truck while I get all the waves? Go right ahead, Kahoku. Fine by me!”

Before Kahoku could say anything else, Mason had already dove into the ocean. “Something doesn’t seem right with him, Kahoku. Did you see that glazed look in his eyes? Is he doing drugs again?” asked Jonathon, who had jumped out of the truck bed and was standing next to Kahoku on the sand.

“Pretty sure. Told him that we can surf later, but you know he’s not listening. We just gotta watch him so he doesn’t get hurt,” said Kahoku, who was visibly worried.

“Kahoku, it’s big out there. Mason will get hurt if he’s not thinking straight...”

But before Jonathon could even finish his sentence, Kahoku had

already ran clear across the beach toward the shoreline and was diving into the water. Jonathon panicked as he chased after Kahoku. Half of Mason's new board had washed up onto the shore. Jonathon grabbed the board and then looked out into the angry ocean to see where his friends were, but it was difficult to see either of them amidst the enormous swells. All Jonathon could do was hope that both of his friends were all right.

Meanwhile, Kahoku struggled to stay afloat amidst the brutal and unforgiving waves. He had never swum in such conditions, but he was determined to find Mason and bring him back to shore. The water around him was very murky because of the constant pounding of the waves, but that didn't discourage him. Just as Kahoku was about to swim further out past the first buoy, he caught a glimpse of Mason's bright-yellow surf shorts. As Kahoku swam closer to Mason, he could see Mason's unconscious body swaying back and forth in perfect timing with the surge of the water. *You should have listened to me and just stayed on the beach, Aikane [friend]*, thought Kahoku, as he grabbed Mason and started towing Mason toward the shoreline. *All I have to do now is get Mason to shore. I can do this. We will be all right. Sure, there will be questions to answer, especially from Dad, but this time will be different. I won't make excuses for Mason's behavior. This time I am going to tell Dad that Mason needs help. I am no longer going to keep Mason's drug problem a secret*, thought Kahoku.

As Kahoku continued swimming toward the beach, he caught sight of the other half of Mason's board. Kahoku grabbed the board, placed Mason on top, and then started pulling the board to shore. The waves were unrelenting, but Kahoku was making progress--he could see Jonathon pacing up and down the beach.

"Almost there! Hold on, Mason! You're going to be all right!" shouted Kahoku, as he looked over at Mason's unconscious body.

Suddenly, Kahoku felt something tug on his leg. He tried to

shake it off, but whatever it was, it would not let go. Mustering up all the strength he had left, Kahoku pushed the board toward shore and hoped that the oncoming wave would take Mason back to the beach. Kahoku could feel his body being pulled farther and farther out to sea. He was too far from shore, and too weak from resisting the force that was pulling him under the water. There was no going back now. Unable to surface for air, Kahoku knew it was just a matter of time before his lungs could no longer provide him with the oxygen he needed. Memories of holding his little sister Wehi for the very first time eased his anxiety. *I am going to miss you, Wehi*, he thought, as his mind wandered off on memories of his little sister's smile and her silly laugh. Then, everything just faded away.

Back on the beach, Jonathon carefully pulled Mason off his board and placed him on his beach towel. A tourist had called 9-1-1, and the paramedics had just stepped onto the beach. Seeing that help had arrived, Jonathon ran up to Mason's truck and grabbed Kahoku's board. He then returned to the shore and started walking out into the water. "Kahoku! Kahoku!" he screamed, hoping that Kahoku would surface. Not wasting any more time, Jonathon jumped onto the board and had just started to paddle out when he felt someone grab the board from behind him.

"Water's too rough, Young Man," said a police officer who had just arrived. "Let the lifeguards go out and find your friend."

"You don't understand. Kahoku saved Mason's life and now he needs help. I can't just stay here when he is out there! He's my best friend, Officer! He's my best friend!"



On the opposite side of town, Wehi and her mom, Mālie, had just gotten all their errands done. They were just about to run inside the pizzeria and pick up a pizza for Kahoku when a police officer, who

worked with Wehi's dad, Manu, pulled up alongside their car in the parking lot.

"Hello, Kawehi. Hello, Mālie."

"Hello, Officer Ron. Mom and I were just about to pick up a pizza for my brother, Kahoku. Did you come to pick up a pizza too?"

"Sorry Wehi, I did not come to pick up a pizza--not today."

"Hello, Ron. Is there anything wrong? Am I parked in a no parking zone?" asked my mom.

"No, Mālie. Uh, can you and Wehi follow me over to the hospital?"

"Ron, did something bad happen to Manu?" asked my mom, but Officer Ron did not answer. "Ron, can you just answer the question? Please Ron, can you look at me instead of looking down at your feet and tell me if Manu is hurt?" implored my mom. But Officer Ron did not look up at my mom--he just continued to stare down at his feet.

After a few moments had passed, Officer Ron asked again, "Mālie, can you follow me to the hospital?"

My mom looked over at me, started the car, and then followed Officer Ron to the hospital. Neither of us knew what to say. All we could do was keep pace with Officer Ron's police car as it continued to flash its lights and pass other vehicles on the road.

When Mom and I arrived at the emergency room we were met by my grandpa Pono, who was the attending physician that day. "Pono, is Manu okay? What happened?" asked my mom.

"Grandpa Pono, is my dad hurt?" I asked.

"Mālie, Wehi, you both need to be strong, very strong. Follow me," answered my grandfather.

"Grandpa Pono, is my daddy okay?" I asked again, as I grabbed hold of my grandfather's hand and walked with him down the long, sterile corridor, past the nurses station, to a room in the back, far away from all the other rooms.

“Manu,” announced Grandpa Pono, “Mālie and Wehi are here.” But my father did not look at us right away. He was standing next to a hospital bed and looking down at an envelope that he held in his hands.

“This is the only piece of my son that will leave this cold room with me today,” whispered my dad as he placed a lock of my brother’s hair into the envelope then looked over at us. My father’s eyes were red and swollen from the many tears that he had cried. My mother furrowed her eyebrows and peered over at my father.

“Manu, why did you say what you did? What is going on? What happened to my son? My baby--he’s still with us, isn’t he Manu?” asked my mom as she grabbed my hand. My dad slowly shook his head from side to side. My mom started to collapse onto the floor, but my grandfather quickly caught her. As my Grandpa Pono cradled my mom in his arms, my mom let out a cry to the heavens above, a cry that will forever remain etched in my mind. “My son, my son. NO GOD, not my baby! Not Kahoku!” wailed my mother as she stood up and ran to the other side of my brother’s hospital bed. All the nurses that were in the room attending to my brother stopped for a brief moment to wipe the tears that fell from their eyes.

My dad gently reached over, hugged my brother and kissed his forehead. “I love you very much, Son,” he said, tenderly. Then, in a voice that I had never heard before, my father cried out, “Father-in-Heaven, if there is a chance that my son’s body can be healed, and if his soul still lingers here with us, please grant us more time with him. If Heaven is in need of another soul, please take my life and spare my son. Please do not let my son die before me! Please take me instead!” My father continued to sob as he lifted my brother up to his chest and held him close to his heart.

As I listened to my parents and looked over at my brother, I could feel my heart break and my body grow weak--as if my life too, had ended at that moment. The thought that my brother had passed away

was too much for my heart to handle. I couldn't accept the fact that my brother would never wake up, or that my brother would never smile at me again. *No! This is not happening--it is all a bad dream*, I thought, as my mind refused to believe that my brother Kahoku was dead. The room starting spinning around me, but I refused to sit down. All I wanted to do was run away from this dreadful reality. But there was no place that I could run away to. Every part of me became frozen and still. Though I was aware of the immense suffering that my mom, dad, and my grandfather were experiencing, I had somehow become disconnected and affectless. I just stood in the doorway as my family fell to pieces before my eyes.

After holding my brother close to him for several minutes, my dad gently placed Kahoku back on the hospital bed's pillow and turned around to check on me. "Wehi, come stand next to me. Come let Kahoku hear your voice one more time. Come tell your big brother that you will always love him and that you will always keep the memory of him alive in your pu'uwai [heart]." But despite my dad's plea, I remained still. I wanted to go over and stand next to my father, but my legs would not move.

"Manu," pleaded my mom, "let her be. This is too much for her to process. Maybe we should say goodbye to our son and..." My mom started to fall apart again. "I don't know what I am saying. How can I say goodbye to my son? Manu, help me, please! I don't know what I should do!" cried my mom.

"I can't help anyone, Mālie," sobbed my father. "I don't even know how to help myself right now. I don't have the strength to do or say anything that will help anyone. I feel paralyzed, Mālie. I feel paralyzed!" cried my dad as he collapsed into the chair next to the side of Kahoku's bed and buried his face in his hands.

My parents' escalating anguish soon melted away my frozen state of being and nudged me into action. I knew that I needed to comfort and help them through this, even though I was struggling to

come to terms with my brother's passing. Although I was scared of seeing my big brother so helpless and still, I mustered up what little strength I had and slowly walked over to his bed. My dad grabbed my hand and kissed it, while my mom walked around Kahoku's bed, sat down next to me, and put her head onto my shoulder. As I stood between both of my parents, I could no longer avoid the inevitable and looked down at my handsome brother. I struggled to hold back the tears when I saw the water dripping down from Kahoku's nose and ears. Though I wanted to break down and cry, I did not want to cause my parents more pain. But my resolve to be strong for the both of them was slowly unraveling. Once again, I completely withdrew myself from everything happening around me. My dad looked over at me and started to whisper something to me, but I could not hear him. All I could hear was the sound of my heart breaking as I placed my hand over my big brother's heart and looked at his handsome face.

The light in Kahoku's beautiful caramel-colored eyes was gone, and I could no longer deny the obvious--my brother was dead! My big brother Kahoku was gone, and in his absence, my mind could not stop replaying the last moments that Kahoku and I shared together.

Soon after the memories began, dark voices within my grieving soul started screaming at me, reminding me of the many opportunities that I had to warn Kahoku. *I should have told him that something bad was going to happen!*

Finally, when my parents stood up and kissed my brother goodbye, I broke down. I turned around and faced my distraught grandfather, who had taken a seat next to the doorway of Kahoku's hospital room. "Grandpa Pono, isn't there something that you could do to bring Kahoku back to us? Please, Grandpa Pono, please!"

"I am sorry, Wehi, but there is nothing that I can do to bring Kahoku back," responded my grandfather, as he got up from his seat and rushed over to my side. The journey now ahead of my family

was one that would not include my brother, and I did not know how we could go on without him.

The weeks leading to Kahoku's farewell seemed to flow into one miserable blur. Storm after storm battered my little green island, but I didn't care. I had been living without the sun since Kahoku passed away. I kept myself busy by looking through all the gifts and pictures that Kahoku had given me. When I had gathered up all my memorabilia of him, I decided to put them into Kahoku's room next to all of his trophies. Somehow, being in his room and looking at all of his pictures gave me a little sense of peace.

My parents, however, could find no solace. My dad just sat in his rocking chair and looked out toward the mountains for hours on end, and my mom never left her bedroom. Grandpa Pono took some time off from the hospital to help my mom and dad make all the funeral arrangements. Although he tried really hard to be strong for all of us, I knew that Grandpa Pono missed Kahoku very much. On more than one occasion, I heard Grandpa Pono sobbing as he sat outside on the porch, next to the fragrant puakenikeni tree that he and Kahoku had planted several years ago.

The night before Kahoku's funeral, I found myself remembering how much fun Kahoku and I had whenever our family went camping by the beach or pig hunting in the mountains. As the memories continued to play out in my mind, I started to lament over my new reality, so I picked up one of my brother's pictures and stared at his handsome face. *How can I go camping without you, Uku? How can I enjoy Thanksgiving and Christmas without you, Uku? How can I enjoy anything without you, Uku?* I held Kahoku's picture close to my heart as I slowly knelt down next to his bed and pressed my face against the soft Hawaiian quilt so that my parents wouldn't hear me cry.

The next day brought a sense of unwelcome finality to my family. This was the day that we would bury my brother. After my

Grandfather Pono had given Kahoku's eulogy, all of the people who had come to mourn my brother made their way up to his casket to say goodbye. When it was my turn to go up and kiss Kahoku goodbye, my knees buckled and I fell to the ground. My dad quickly walked over to me, picked me up, and then carried me over to Kahoku's casket. I slowly wiggled my way out of my dad's arms and stood beside the blue stainless steel box that held what was most precious to me. A big part of me wanted to turn around and run out of the room, but at the same time, I could not bring myself to leave my brother's side. This was the last time I would see him. I knew that once the casket was closed and sealed, I would never see Kahoku's handsome face again, except in my memories.

After the burial, everyone gathered at Wailua River State Park. My mom and I got into our wa'a (canoe), then my dad and Grandpa Pono paddled us out into the bay, where we were encircled by my brother's friends, who were on their surfboards. After all of the surfers had joined hands, my cousin Ben dropped thousands of red and white rose petals from his helicopter above. After the last rose petal fell onto the water, I lifted my heavy, puffy eyes and looked over at all the people who had come to share this moment with us. That is when I noticed a grey-haired, muscular Hawaiian man paddling his surfboard right next to our canoe. He was my mom's father, my Grandpa Ke Ali'i, whom I had not seen since I was two years old. He had come to give the pule (prayer) for my brother, Kahoku.