

FOREVER.

Kaomao's thatched hut was far up on one of the hillsides of the Nuuanu Valley. It was sheltered from the noonday sun by a far-spreading banyan tree, and on one of the lower branches of this Kaomao was resting. Her white cotton muumuu revealed soft rounding curves and long slender lines; her eyes were shadowed by her dusky hair, and her fingers idly plucked a lei of heavily perfumed, heavily petaled jasmine. From her lips fell a cadence of tones softer than the wind that rustled the attired banana leaves, sweeter than the rippling brook that hurried by. But Kaomao was not happy, and her song was more plaintive than the note of the morning dove.

Umanunu, the girl's grandmother, thrust her wrinkled face between the leaves; with her skinny arm and hand she snatched the jasmine wreath.

"Is it your wedding wreath, Kaomao?" The tone was mocking, and the girl did not answer.

"And you sing a funeral dirge!" the old woman jeered.

"It may be my wedding wreath." The girl's voice was still soft and sweet, still full of mournful music.

"The perfume of the jasmine lasts long after the flower dies."

"Ah! But even its perfume will not last until the coming of a faithless lover," croaked Umanunu.

"Palloaleke is not faithless!" cried Kaomao. "I will believe in him forever. I will believe in him until he himself tells me that he is false."

The old crone laughed, but her merriment was cracked and discordant.

"Palloaleke is beautiful," she taunted, "and the girls in the town have eyes. He is strong, but the girls down there will not let him leave them. His voice is sweet, and the women have ears."

"He is strong for me!" Kaomao's voice was passionate. "He is beautiful for me, and he sings only for me. I know that he would come if he could, we are far—far out of the world, and he has been detained. He cannot come to me, I know. And there is some good reason."

"Far out of the world," echoed the woman. "Three hours to the coast! If I were a girl, and my lover deserted me, I would find him. I would go to him, and if he were faithless I would—"

The sinister laugh conveyed her meaning quite as well as words would have done.

"And I would not have Palloaleke imagine for an instant that I doubted him, that I thought him faithless," answered Kaomao. "He will come in his own good time, and his time will be my time."

Umanunu, angered by the girl's obstinacy, hobbled back to the hut, muttering her scorn for the girl who trusted her maledictions on the lover who lingered.

For many weeks no word had come to Kaomao from her betrothed, although the day for the wedding was drawing near, and the old woman's heart burned with vicarious vengeance for the grandchild she loved.

Kaomao, left alone in the banyan tree, lay silent now, her fingers resting on the heap of blossoms in her lap. The noonday sun, high above her sheltering leaves, dropped warm patches of gold on her white gown, on her black veil of hair, on her small brown hands.

So motionless she lay that a brilliant iridescent lizard crept cautiously at first, then carelessly along the twisting root, across her breast, and nestled in the warm flowers in her lap. She was not asleep, but her thoughts were far away from her surroundings. They were with Palloaleke, searching for him, following him, calling for him, assuring him of her love that would believe in him forever.

When she opened her eyes at last it was to see Palloaleke sitting on the ground at a little distance from her, his eyes intent upon her, his hands so tightly clasped about the gnarled root of the tree that the veins stood out in ridges.

"Pallo!"

The girl's first impulse was to rush to him, to throw her arms about him, but pride held her back. Umanunu's sinister laugh, Umanunu's jeering words, were still ringing in her ears.

Why had Palloaleke been so long away? Why did he sit there so far from her? Why had he not taken her into his arms as he had so often done when he had found her asleep in the banyan tree? Why had he not aroused her with love's murmured words, with love's impassioned kisses? All these questions held her, and beyond the half-spoken name she uttered no sound.

The man sat still, looking gloomily at her, hungrily drinking in the lovely dusky face, the half-veiled eyes, the slender lines, the soft rounding curves.

"I have been long away—a long time away." His voice was hoarse and rough and low. "—I could not come."

Kaomao's only answer was a slow movement of the delicate brows, a faint quiver of the full scarlet lips.

"And Kaomao?" He gasped for breath. "Kaomao, I am going away—going away tonight at sundown."

"Going away?" Kaomao sat up straight and leaned toward her lover. He was faithless, then? He had come himself to tell her that he was faithless!

"I am going away!" Again he struggled for the breath that formed the words. "Forever, Kaomao."

Kaomao's brown hands were crushing the jasmine petals she held. Her eyes were intent on his eyes.

"Palloaleke!" She breathed the

name questioningly, brokenly. "I have been detained for three weeks—"

There was a long pause. "For three weeks at the Kalihi hospital. I go tonight on the Kilauea Hou—tonight at sundown!"

Palloaleke's slow words ended in a long heart-broken sob. His eyes were swept by a torrent of tears.

For an instant Kaomao's eyes grew wide with horror. Kalihi—the leper hospital! Kilauea Hou—the Molokai boat! A single shriek like no human sound burst from her lips. Then, stretching her arms toward him, she sprang forward to fling herself on his breast, but she stumbled heavily over an obstacle that had been thrust in front of her, and fell outstretched on the ground.

Umanunu, who had thrown her down, crouched low over her, wildly waving her hands, warding off the man who now bent over the girl, but made no move to touch her.

"A leper! A leper! How dare you, a leper, come near her?" the old hag screamed. "I've killed her, perhaps, but better a thousand times that she should be dead so than that you should touch her!"

Shrieks and oaths and curses filled the air, but Kaomao, stunned by her fall, lay inert and still, and Palloaleke bent lower, lower over the prostrate form. Not even the outer hem of her garment did he touch with hand or lip.

"Farewell, farewell, forever." The words were breathed, not spoken. Crashing through the undergrowth, he rushed down the hill, out into the sunlit valley, on and on, with never a backward glance until he found himself on the boat that would carry him to the land of living death.

Umanunu knew well enough how to prolong Kaomao's swoon, and not until the afternoon was well advanced did the girl move. The shadows stretched far, the sun sank low, its red disk hovering over the blue sea. At sundown! The Kilauea Hou! With a wild shriek Kaomao sprang to her feet, and rushed down the hill along the path her lover had traversed. She was followed only by the cackling chuckle of the old woman who, motionless and speechless, waited where she was for the girl's return.

The upbraidings she expected were never spoken. Like a slender white ghost Kaomao traversed the moonlit grove, passed the woman silently, and silently entered the hut. Never again, in fact, did Umanunu hear Kaomao's voice. Mutely the girl listened to the report that Umanunu brought to her from the town. With downcast eyes and firmly closed lips she heard how the attention of the health officers had been attracted to Palloaleke working on the wharves, how he had been sent to the Kalihi hospital; how, although he had but the faintest taint of the dread disease, he had been ordered to Molokai for the safety of the island; how he had broken from the guards for his farewell visit to Nuuanu.

The days passed and, curiously quiet, the girl moved about doing apparently nothing, apparently seeing nothing, but the curves of her red lips grew straighter, and in the depths of her luminous brown eyes was the shadow of a definite resolve.

Heavily petalled, heavily petaled jasmine blossomed everywhere, pink and white begonias shook their petals at her, scarlet and crimson and yellow flowers poured themselves profusely at her feet, but Kaomao ignored them all. When she did anything she worked automatically, fashioning some lei of soft white feathers. It was a month after Palloaleke's departure when she stood one day in the doorway of her hut, a wreath of the soft plumes on her dark hair, another about her neck, hanging far below her waist.

"If I could but see you thus, a bride, my Kaomao!" cried the grandmother, and she held a small mirror before the girl's eyes.

Kaomao, taking the glass in both hands, looked long at her own reflection, and then she smiled for the first time in all that month. That night Umanunu slept profoundly, and in the morning when she awoke she was alone in the grass hut under the banyan tree.

Down on the beach, on the other side of the hill, Kaomao, gowning in the clinging white muumuu that Palloaleke loved, was pushing a light canoe out into the water. The sea and the sky gleamed like a soft gray pearl. The pearl faded slowly, definitely, and grew milky white. The sky blushed rose and red, the sea stole its color. The coral reef flashed pink, then pearl, then white, and straight toward the rising disk of the sun Kaomao pointed the prow of her canoe. She paddled steadily out through the reef, and as she paddled she sang. Her voice was softer than the morning breeze that rustled in the fringing palms behind the beach. It was sweeter than the lapping water that crept about the coral reefs. Her melody rippled gaily with the waves that carried her boat, for it was of love, of love's triumph, that she sang. Once she looked back at the land she was leaving, but only once, and then she saw the island stretching itself, rosy and flushed with light, up from the sea to greet the sun. After that one backward glance Kaomao kept her eyes and her boat steadily toward the east, and gave no further heed, no further thought to the home she was leaving forever.

She was as familiar with the sea as with the banyan tree that sheltered her thatched hut. She had spent days in her canoe, long days and long nights. Her muscles were as tireless as the bronze they counterfeited, and now her slender body swayed with the movement of the waves, with the rhythm of her song. Dried fish and fruits she had brought with her, and

at night she slept as securely, as peacefully, upon the ocean's breast as in her own Nuuanu hut. The waves and the winds were with her, and she was guided by the sun and by the stars.

It was early morning when the gaunt gray cliffs of Molokai rose out of the pearly sky, but Kaomao knew better than to approach the settlement upon its shores by daylight. Rounding the first high promontory, she ventured close to the land, and saw a small deserted beach, a short stretch of white sand, from which the hills sloped gradually up and back. She stopped paddling, and, with a sharp knife, cut the things that bound the outrigger of the canoe. For a few moments she gashed and hacked the bottom and sides of the tiny craft. As she could destroy the boat that had brought her to him, Palloaleke could not make her go back as she had come. For a single instant she stood erect in the canoe as it settled slowly down into the river. Her white cotton gown was drawn close about her waist, her brown body gleamed in the morning sun, her arms were stretched above her head. Then she plunged into the sea, and with long straight strokes swam toward the deserted beach.

The next day, at sunrise, she stood on the hill above the leper settlement. She looked down on the white houses, on the church, on the school, but still she did not dare to show herself. She must find Palloaleke. She must know where Palloaleke lived. And all at once she saw him, quite near her, stretched out on the desolate hillside, his mournful eyes turned with passionate longing toward the west, toward Nuuanu.

Stealthily she crept closer to him. But even now she must not speak to him. Even there in that deserted wilderness of gray crag and rock she must not let him know that she had come.

The day passed, the noon sun brooded low over the sea and land, the night fell all gold and sapphire blue and ruby red. The moon rose clear and full. The same moon that melowed and softened the mellow softness of Nuuanu Valley revealed the scarred white desolation of Molokai, but Palloaleke's eyes saw only the Nuuanu moonlight, saw the deep perched shadows of the banyan sheltering a small grass hut, saw the frayed leaves of the banana tree, and in its fringed fan shadow he saw Kaomao gowning all in white, crowned with a jasmine lei.

Quietly, softly, out of the shadow into the moonlight came Kaomao, her white gown falling about her, a white feather wreath on her head, a white feather wreath about her neck and hanging to her waist.

"Kaomao! Kaomao!" cried Palloaleke. But he buried his face in his arms to shut out the haunting moonlight vision.

"Palloaleke!" It was a cry, but it was soft and low and sweet. Kaomao's tender arms were about his neck, his head was on Kaomao's breast, her lips were pressed to his.

In an instant he realized the truth. It was Kaomao, Kaomao herself, in all her exquisite beauty, with all her sweet young life. Almost brutally he repulsed her, but she would not be repulsed. With angry words he tried to drive her from him, but she would not go. He ran from her, but she followed him. He begged and pleaded, but her arguments were stronger than his, for the love that weakened his gave strength to hers, and before the morning came she had conquered, he had yielded.

The old priest who had given his life to those island wrecks was slowly climbing the hill to Palloaleke's house. In his heart was a prayer for aid in comforting this latest exile, this most unreconciled addition to his flock. At the doorway he stopped aghast, for he saw Kaomao's arms about her lover's neck. Kaomao's soft cheek against her lover's cheek.

In hurried words she told her story. With firmness she announced her intention of staying with Palloaleke. The priest's arguments were more fluent than Palloaleke's had been, but they were of no use. Kaomao's dark eyes met his steadily, she did not falter, she did not waver. To his threats, to his warnings, to his commands in the name of the island authorities, she made but one reply. She would stay with Palloaleke. He was her lover. She would live with him as he lived. She would die with him as he died.

As she had overcome the arguments of Palloaleke's love, she overcame those of the priest's fear, and before the sun had absorbed the island's shadows, the priest, who had given up his life for love of God, blessed in the name of the church the woman who had given up her life for love of a man.—Kathryn Jarboe, in The Argonaut.

Rail-Bearing Rifled Guns.

The peculiarity of the Culbert gun, an American invention, consists in the use of hard steel balls in the rifled grooves, to give easier passage for the projectile. The projectile itself is of steel, without a jacket, and travels smoothly over its rolling bed of balls, acquiring, on account of the twist of the grooves, a rotating motion like that of an ordinary projectile fired from a gun of the common type. It is claimed that the new gun gives 40 per cent. greater average velocity, penetration and range than can be obtained by a projectile of the same weight fired by the same charge of powder from other guns. Whether the invention will come into practical use remains to be seen.—Exchange.

Swallows Chase Cat.

On the top of a dilapidated chimney in his back premises a man in Malden, England, observed a huge cat endeavoring to reach a swallow's nest built under a projecting course of brickwork. The parrot birds flew around the cat, endeavoring to drive it away. Not being able to do so they disappeared, returning in a few moments with nine other swallows. These in a compact body charged the cat with such force as to almost dislodge it, and it hurriedly descended to a place of safety.

The Needed Policeman.

It does seem a pity that so many of our best people run to waste. Don't condemn a first-class circus, for it is a thing of good intent.

There seem to be very few hand organ men who turn out well. Baldness is a thing from which many men have but a hair-breadth escape. Some people never seem able to hold their own, unless it is a grudge. They mean a ship, but, it takes a woman, too, to complete courtship.

A Curious Happening.

The Church of St. Nicolas, in the city of Rheims, is surrounded with pillars. When a certain bell in the tower is rung the top of one pillar away to the extent of seven inches on each side, although the base is immovable, and the stones are so firmly cemented as to seem like a solid piece of masonry. Notwithstanding that each of the four bells is about the same distance from the trembling pillar, none of the others has the slightest effect on it.

Pigeon in House of Commons.

While two members of the British House of Commons were lunching in the restaurant of that body the other day a pigeon flew in at the window, and, after alighting on the floor, jumped on the table. It was evidently exhausted and hungry and eagerly took the food which was given it.

The Glow Worm.

Sir Oliver Lodge, an English naturalist, has lately called attention to the curious fact that during a thunderstorm a glowworm extinguishes its light for a second or a second and a half before each flash, relighting at an equal interval after the flash.

American Prunes from France.

Bordeaux, France, is the center of the prune trade of the world. Immense quantities of California prunes are shipped there, repacked and re-exported to the United States and sold in our markets for imported goods.

Rice Growers in the South.

Land around the bayous of Louisiana and Texas, which until 1895 was classed as worthless, now yields \$25,000,000 worth of rice. About 100 Japanese expert rice growers are in this region.

Automobile Hurts Business.

The automobile is hurting the business of fashionable tailors in Europe. It is found that people do not care what they wear under their loose coveralls when they go motorizing.

First Blooded in Civil War.

The first blooded in the Civil War occurred April 22, 1861, at Baltimore, Md., the victims being Luther O. Lind and A. G. Whittier, of Lowell.

Baltimore Fire Loss.

The reports of the adjusting committee at Baltimore show that the total loss figured up to \$35,451,732, covered by insurance policies amounting to \$12,500,000. There was about \$1,000,000 salvage.

Animal Protection in Italy.

Italy has twelve societies for the protection of animals, and no country needs them more; yet most of these are presided over and supported by foreigners, chiefly Englishmen and women.

Emperor Francis Joseph, whose favorite sport is chamois hunting, recently shot his two thousandth chamois.

DISRAELI REMEMBERED.

Waited Until Friend Won Seat in Parliament Before Replying.

Disraeli, even if he jested about his foes, had a seriously good memory for his friends. Whether or not they, too, had their names written down and put in a drawer, they had a wonderful facility for public repartee. A score of well-known cases could be quoted, but one that is less conspicuous and less familiar will be new to many readers.

As a boy, Sir John Pope Hennessy conceived a romantic admiration for Disraeli, and wrote to tell him so in a letter which ended, "I love you."

No answer was vouchsafed; Disraeli had an almost inflexible rule of no reply to unknown correspondents. Years passed. Then Pope Hennessy won an Irish seat. The first congratulations he got in London were Disraeli's, who, without further ado, invited him to dinner to meet other and more famous members of parliament; and who, later, gave him a colonial governorship. The blind affection of the boy undoubtedly influenced the career of the man.—London Chronicle.

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