

Mū
A Play in One Act
By
Eric Stack

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CHARACTERS

<u>KŪLIA WILIKOI</u>	Female. Early 30's. Wife of Pūlau. Kūlia was a Hawaiian immersion teacher on the island of Molokai. She recently moved back to her childhood home on the island of Hawai'i where she enrolled in the administrative training program to become a principal. Her name is shortened to Lia in the play.
<u>PŪLAU WILIKOI</u>	Male. Early 30's. Hawaiian Homesteader from Molokai. Husband of Kūlia. Pūlau is a subsistence farmer and also an activist for Hawaiian rights.
<u>'AWAPUHI MEDEIROS</u>	Female. Mid-30's. Kūlia's sister. She is an elementary school teacher at a Hawaiian language immersion school.
<u>KAWIKA MEDEIROS</u>	Male. Mid-30's. 'Awapuhi's husband. He runs the family's banana business.
<u>MŪ/WELDER/DANCER</u>	Field hand and helper to Pūlau. This character can also double as the hula ki'i dancer.
<u>KI'I DANCERS</u>	

Note: Mū/welder/dancer can also double as the hula ki'i dancer. Depending on the desires and resources of the production, a separate dancer can be used to perform the hula ki'i and /or a female dancer can be added to the hula during Lia's story in scene three and at the end of the play.

SYNOPSIS

After returning home with her new husband to start a new life, Kūlia discovers there is no escape from her past or her Hawaiian culture.

SETTING

'Awapuhi's 10 acre Hawaiian Homestead banana farm at Pana'ewa, Hilo, Hawai'i. The scene is the patio area of a guesthouse. The guesthouse is a shipping container that has been modified for a residence. The patio is more of a work area for the farm rather than a place for entertainment or relaxation.

TIME

The present.

NOTES:

Although the drama is populated with cultural terminology and Hawaiian language (which the unfamiliar are parenthetically defined in italics), all can be defined and researched online and subsequently interpreted. There are three terms, though, that need to be examined within the context of the play:

- 1) The hula ki'i which is present in the prologue, scene four and at the end is based on the type of hula ki'i performed by a dancer and not a puppet. The hula is stylized for the play and can be accompanied with a pahu or drum. Stylized means the hula ki'i's traditional use is modified for the play. For example, oli or chant accompaniment is not necessary, but can be used if desired. The script calls for male and/or female dancer or dancers but can be modified due to production interpretation or limitations.
- 2) The mū is a mythical Hawaiian personage and used in this drama by the characters as a derogatory reference to the helper whom Pūlau employs. Physical appearance of the mū is left to the interpretation of the production, but it is not the play's intention to represent a specific ethnicity, race, or religion.
- 3) Na'au has many meanings from the intestines or guts to mood or temper. When 'Awapuhi uses it in scene four she is implying a state of mind.

Lyrics to *Wai'alalā* and *Ua kau ko'u weli* are original. *Malua Ki'i Wai* is traditional.

ACT I
PROLOGUE

(Front patio area of the guesthouse, the residence of PŪLAU and KŪLIA.)

Dark stage. The beat of the pahu [*traditional drum*] is heard. Lights fade up. A welding screen is backlit creating a silhouette of a dancer in a ki'i posture. The dancer performs a stylized hula ki'i with percussion only. It is not accompanied by an oli [*traditional chant*]. After the hula finishes, lights crossfade to scene one.)

SCENE 1

(Patio area. It is pre-dawn. Morning noises of birds chirping, mynah birds fighting, chickens squawking and a rooster crowing. This continues until the scene is established. Then there is the sound of rain. First, it is soft and distant, but as it advances closer, the sound becomes louder until it resounds on the tin roof of the patio. LIA enters running from stage left covering her head with a newspaper. As she enters the patio area, a motion detector flood light bumps on. LIA chants to the rain out toward the audience.)

LIA

Ua Kau Ko'u Weli i Kā Keōlewa 'ike kū.
Ua pau Keālia i ka lepo 'ula 'ula.
'Auhea ka 'alaea o kou maka mākole pū?
Pulu piha paha i ka ua o Ka'ohu

*I am filled with terror at Keōlewa's edge.
Keālia is finished by the red dirt.
Where is the salt of your swollen eyes?
Perhaps drenched by the rain of Ka'ohu.*

(The rain subsides. LIA exits through the screen door. She screams offstage.)

LIA (cont'd)

(Offstage)

You scared the shit out of me.

(PŪLAU enters through the screen door. He carries a .22 rifle and the damp newspaper. He is looking out into the yard. The rooster is heard flying off. PŪLAU reacts.)

PŪLAU

Kala mai [*Sorry*].

(PŪLAU mounts the rifle in a deer rack and begins to scan the newspaper. He is looking for something in the paper. LIA continues to talk to him through the screen door.)

LIA

What? Was there some pig or something in the yard?

PŪLAU

No pig.

LIA

Then what?

(PŪLAU continues to read through the newspaper. He has found the article he was looking for. LIA disappears from the screen door and then returns with coffee for PŪLAU. She enters and sets the coffee on the picnic table.)

PŪLAU

The rooster.

LIA

What?

PŪLAU

The frickin' rooster is all.

LIA

You were going to pick the rooster off with your .22?

PŪLAU

Damn right. Prick.

LIA

You'll kill it.

PŪLAU

Waste time with the pellet gun; but it keeps coming back and harassing the hens, so—pak—then he gets the message.

LIA

He'll get the message, okay. Are you sure 'Awa-them are alright with that?

PŪLAU

Smart is why. I have to hide behind the screen or else he flies.

LIA

You were going to shoot through the screen?

PŪLAU

Sure. Easy-easy to fix.

LIA

He doesn't fly when he sees me.

PŪLAU

You never shoot him twice with the pellet gun.

LIA

He likes me. He dances for me.

PŪLAU

When?

LIA

In the afternoon when I feed the hens.

PŪLAU

You feed him?

LIA

Why not? I don't see how it hurts.

PŪLAU

No good is why. Then he keeps hanging around here crapping all over everywhere.

LIA

That's because he was here before us.

PŪLAU

You know Molokai, animals are animals and people are the boss. Not equals. If they become too rascal—pak—that's how.

LIA

The animals or the people?

PŪLAU

Vagrant is all, who abuses the hens.

LIA

I think the hens like it. He's so rough with them.

PŪLAU

Rough.

LIA

You know it.

PŪLAU

I don't know about that.

LIA

Until we get our own place, don't be shooting everything you don't like. Remember, we're not on some forty acre homestead like Molokai. It's ten acres and 'Awapuhi-them live just over there and you never know where the workers are or the kids. Besides, it's their animals.

PŪLAU

They should keep their animals on their side then. Frickin' cat always leaving paw prints all over my truck.

LIA

It's a truck Pū. And it rains every hour here and the paw prints wash off.

PŪLAU

Still-yet. Waste time to wash your truck then shame to get cat prints in the morning.

LIA

You don't like pussy prints all over your big diesel man-truck? (LIA kisses PŪLAU.) It won't be long and then we'll have our own place.

PŪLAU

In the country. I don't like to live like one Japanese with bonsai plants and colored gravel for a yard.

LIA

Don't worry there's plenty of country around.

PŪLAU

And a little bit of privacy where I can shoot a chicken if like.

(‘AWAPUHI enters.)

‘AWAPUHI

Aloha kakahiaka [*Good morning*].

More kakahiaka than aloha. LIA
 Poor thing. ‘AWAPUHI
 ‘Awapuhi, what’s up with that rogue rooster? PŪLAU
 King Kelly? ‘AWAPUHI
 There’s a name? PŪLAU
 Yeah, the kids named it. ‘AWAPUHI
 The kids named it. LIA
 The one with the comb that looks like it was surgically removed with a pellet gun? He’s over at our place having his way with our hens. ‘AWAPUHI
 (to LIA) PŪLAU
 Nānā [*See*]. (To ‘AWAPUHI) And they like it?
 What’s not to like? The fancy wing dance, the crooning, the side step? Our hens squat in anticipation. ‘AWAPUHI
 (Both women laugh.)
 A rooster like that can ruin your hens. Abuse them. Bring disease. PŪLAU
 He’s been around forever. We consider him ours. Common law kind. ‘AWAPUHI
 Kawika said he just showed up one day. PŪLAU

‘AWAPUHI

Yeah, we didn’t buy him.

PŪLAU

So you get no problem with some bum rooster screwing your hens?

‘AWAPUHI

The fertilized eggs get a higher price at the market.

PŪLAU

Humbug that, an egg fertilized by one strange-kind rooster.

‘AWAPUHI

The haoles [*non-Hawaiians*] don’t care as long as it’s free range. (To LIA) Are we still driving in together?

LIA

Sorry. Cannot. I have a meeting.

‘AWAPUHI

Mai hopohopo [*Don’t worry*]. I can wait. We need sister bonding time.

LIA

It’s not at the school.

(LIA gives a surreptitious glance to PŪLAU.)

‘AWAPUHI

I can walk over to the complex.

LIA

Yeah. Let me jump in the shower.

‘AWAPUHI

Okay.

(LIA exits.)

‘AWAPUHI (Cont’d)

(to PŪLAU, referring to the article he is reading)

Mana‘o [*thoughts*] about the papaya farmer calling the anti-GMO activists Stone Age thinkers?

PŪLAU

Whatever. If we don’t start protecting what’s ours, we’ll be back in the Stone Age, then we’ll see how he survives.

‘AWAPUHI

Kawika thinks it’s bad for business.

PŪLAU

These are papayas. There’s no GMO bananas.

‘AWAPUHI

We see another outbreak of the bunchy-top, yeah, maybe.

PŪLAU

We never bring the virus in or the gnats that carry it.

‘AWAPUHI

So you think the farmer deserved to have his trees topped?

PŪLAU

It wasn’t his entire farm.

‘AWAPUHI

We’d go under if a field that size was wiped out here.

PŪLAU

Enough to get the message.

‘AWAPUHI

So you agree?

PŪLAU

Farmers have to work together and not just for the almighty kālā [*dollar*].

‘AWAPUHI

So it’s all for one or none for all?

PŪLAU

Pololei [*correct*]. You don’t agree?

‘AWAPUHI

Sure. Sure. I’m not judging, but you do have a reputation.

PŪLAU

(Exiting inside the house)

Reputation?

‘AWAPUHI

Like a no nonsense kind. Sort of. Shit.

PŪLAU

(Entering with a small container of garbage)

No man likes to have a reputation.

(PŪLAU puts on rubber boots. ‘AWAPUHI does not realize the container is garbage. She takes out a mango peel and a rather brown banana and starts to gnaw on the peel and peel the banana.)

‘AWAPUHI

I meant you have conviction, which if you ask me is in short supply nowadays, especially for the sex carrying the kū. What’s say we pau hana [*party*] tonight?

PŪLAU

You pau hana last night.

‘AWAPUHI

It’s Friday tonight so we party for real?

PŪLAU

Sure.

‘AWAPUHI

Really? All righty then. I’ll bring the pūpū and some libations.

PŪLAU

Nothing crazy, but.

‘AWAPUHI

Haven’t you heard? I’m the crazy sister.

PŪLAU

No GMO either.

‘AWAPUHI

‘Ā ‘oia [*Agreed*]. You’re serious.

(With boots on, PŪLAU exits left with the container of garbage. ‘AWAPUHI realizes what she has been nibbling on. ‘AWAPUHI’S cell phone rings.)

‘AWAPUHI (Cont’d)

(Answering phone)

Hi. No I’m still over at the guesthouse. Almost. Did you look in his bag? His backpack? Yeah it’s in there along with the fundraiser stuff. No. We’re not buying anymore sweet bread. I’m up to here with the sweetbread orders. And chili bowl orders. Make sure Malu has her jacket on and oh, can you go out and wait with them for the bus? Yeah, the mū is out there and...we did. Me and Lia but he just stands there. Okay. Mahalo.

(‘AWAPUHI puts her phone away. LIA is heard offstage.)

LIA

(Offstage)

Shit.

‘AWAPUHI

What’s wrong?

(LIA enters dressed in aloha wear. She is trying to pin on a pair of faux puakenikeni earrings but is obstructed by a towel wrapped around her head.)

LIA

(Hands earrings to ‘AWAPUHI)

Could you please...?

(LIA notices banana peel from banana ‘AWAPUHI ate.)

LIA (Cont’d)

‘Awa, how could you?

‘AWAPUHI

What?

(LIA removes the towel and dries her hair.)

LIA

(To PŪLAU, who is offstage)

Pū, don’t tell me you took my bananas again?

(LIA speaks more to herself than to ‘AWAPUHI indicating she sees the bananas in question offstage.)

LIA (Cont’d)

Shit there they are and the chickens pecking at them.

(LIA wraps her hair up again then sits down and puts on rubber boots.)

What? PŪLAU
(Offstage)

Sorry. LIA

No worries. ‘AWAPUHI

(LIA exits. ‘AWAPUHI looks at her watch and checks her phone while the following conversation occurs offstage.)

What are you doing? PŪLAU
(Offstage)

What does it look like? LIA
(Offstage)

The chickens have been pecking at those. PŪLAU
(Offstage)

(LIA enters with a small hand of brown bananas. She removes her boots.)

The man knows nothing about education. LIA

I think I upset him. ‘AWAPUHI

Good. LIA

(LIA exits into the house with the bananas.)

Look ‘Awa, you should drive yourself in. I have an appointment. LIA (Cont’d)
(Offstage)

Where? I can walk there or get a ride.
‘AWAPUHI

It’s a doctor’s appointment.
LIA

Oh shit. For what?
‘AWAPUHI

(LIA appears at screen door.)

Oh shit.
‘AWAPUHI (Cont’d)

(LIA enters. The sisters hug.)

Really?
‘AWAPUHI (Cont’d)

I got to make sure. But the home test tested positive. Twice.
LIA

Oh shit.
‘AWAPUHI

Don’t tell Pū though. I want to be a hundred percent.
LIA

He doesn’t know?
‘AWAPUHI

‘A’ole [*No*].
LIA

(LIA exits inside the house.)

Huh.
‘AWAPUHI

Why?
(Offstage) LIA

‘AWAPUHI

No. Nothing. I just mentioned pau hana today and he didn’t, you know, put up a fight. Then with this news it made sense, but if he doesn’t know...

LIA

(Offstage)

He’s like that. He likes this aura like he knows everything.

(PŪLAU enters.)

PŪLAU

(To LIA)

Doesn’t your boss know that we live on a banana farm?

(LIA enters with her hair pinned up. She is applying make-up. She has a corsage in her hand and offers it to ‘AWAPUHI.)

LIA

(To ‘AWAPUHI)

‘Awapuhi, could you help me please?

(‘AWAPUHI helps to pin the corsage behind LIA’s ear while LIA continues to put on make-up.)

PŪLAU

It makes no sense. We get bananas everywhere. No sense to take the shriveled up brown ones your boss gives you back to work.

LIA

They’re organic.

PŪLAU

No problem. I’ll spread chicken shit around and then ours can be organic.

LIA

It’s appearances Pū. That’s what we have to do in the outside world. What does it matter if I take them in my lunch? I don’t eat them anyway.

‘AWAPUHI

It’s nothing against our farm Pū. You don’t rise in the DOE [*DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION*] by looks alone.

LIA

I don’t know if that helped, ‘Awa.

PŪLAU

I see.

LIA

(To ‘AWAPUHI)

See.

PŪLAU

Let this poor, ignorant terrorist understand: this haole guy from Michigan likes you to take his shriveled, brown, organic mai‘a [*banana*] home to your banana farm then bring them back in your lunch to throw away?

‘AWAPUHI

He does see.

PŪLAU

Makes no sense.

LIA

Let me put it into perspective then. All your perks like your hunting trips, week long protests, your man-truck with the paw prints? That doesn’t come from spreading chicken shit around. And while we’re on the topic, can you tell your mū to quit lurking in the bananas out front?

PŪLAU

My mū?

LIA

Your kauā [*worker*]. He’s hanging around in the front banana patch. You can’t tell him from a stump. I’d like to get my newspaper without being gawked at, and he freaks ‘Awapuhi’s kids out when they’re waiting for the bus.

PŪLAU

He’s probably trashing.

LIA

Trashing? He’s smoking.

PŪLAU

Smoking?

LIA

That’s how you know he’s there by the smell.

‘AWAPUHI

Pakalōlō [*marijuana*].

PŪLAU
You would know.

‘AWAPUHI
What the hell does that mean?

(PŪLAU starts to exit.)

LIA
Where are you going?

PŪLAU
I’m going to get my mū before the Humane Society picks him up.

LIA
And tell him to go to the packing shed to burn instead of hiding out in the bananas.

(PŪLAU exits.)

‘AWAPUHI
Well if that doesn’t get you in the mood to teach two dozen little fuckers, I don’t know what will.

(LIA and ‘AWAPUHI exit. Lights fade.)

END SCENE 1

SCENE 2

(Later that morning. The sound of a welder is heard followed by the orange glow of an arc behind the welding screen. The screen masks the welding and welder. Lights up. KAWIKA and PŪLAU enter. PŪLAU carries a bucket with the legs of the rooster sticking out. He sets it on the table. During the scene PŪLAU is getting two pots ready to process the chicken. KAWIKA bags empties from the bins to take to the recycling center.

KAWIKA
Sounds like TPAs [*third party agreements*] to me.

PŪLAU
Sure, yeah, no pilikia [*problem*] with that.

KAWIKA
The TPA gets scrutinized too much.